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The Shape of Things

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THE WHOLE NATION MOURNS THE VICTIMS of the school disaster at New London, Texas. Thus far the evidence indicates that a residue gas line from an oil field was tapped for its gas, and that the use of this gas in a faulty conducting system resulted in the explosion. There is a tragic irony in the fact that in the Texas oil fields, spouting forth their natural wealth from the earth, such a disaster should have been occasioned by the desire to economize on heating costs. It is one of the paradoxes of an economic system that seeks to maximize profit and minimize costs, and is wasteful only of human life.

*

THE SLAUGHTER BY INSULAR POLICE OF TEN marching Nationalists in Ponce, the second largest city in Puerto Rico, is the natural and deplorable outcome of a long series of bitter clashes between the authorities and the more intransigent groups on the island. It is significant that the strength of popular feeling against the United States should have increased rather than diminished under the supposed beneficence of the New Deal administration. The details of the incident are still lacking, but enough facts have been published to make it evident that a peaceful demonstration was ruthlessly dispersed by machine-gun fire. We shall print next week an article by Oswald Garrison Villard, who has just returned from the island.

*

PROSPECTS FOR THE CONFERENCE REPORT which seeks to reconcile the Pittman and McReynolds neutrality bills are none too promising. The only favorable development is the likelihood that the McReynolds "cash-and-carry" provision will be accepted instead of the Pittman proposal. The McReynolds bill puts the "cash-and-carry" policy into effect only at the discretion of the President during the next two years. This takes away certain of the dangers of the inflexible Pittman provision, which would operate to the advantage of a great sea power under any circumstances. On the other hand, there is a strong chance that the deplorable clause in the McReynolds bill prohibiting the solicitation or acceptance of funds by belligerents or factions will be retained. While Mr. McReynolds has insisted that the clause was not meant to stop humanitarian contributions, it leaves far too large an area of discretion to the State Department, whose record in the matter of humanitarian aid to Spain has been none too good.

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WHILE MUSSOLINI HAS BEEN ACTING CAESAR in Libya, his troops have suffered a crushing defeat in Spain. This is the first time the Loyalists have taken the offensive, and the rout of the demoralized Italians may prove to be the decisive turn of the war. The crucial role has been played by the new airplanes which the Spanish government has recently acquired, and which have given it the whip hand in aviation. In their hurry to get away, moreover, the Italians left behind large supplies of munitions which will prove useful to the munitions-starved loyalists. The incident is very like what happened during the Russian civil war, when the government troops captured the munitions of Kolchak and Denikin and defeated the Whites with their own batteries. Meanwhile, a dispatch by Pertinax to the New York *Times* reveals that even the English lion-worm is beginning to turn, and is showing a disposition to support Spain before the League of Nations in its protest against the presence of 90,000 Italian troops on Franco's side. England should also act upon the protest from Valencia that while the rebel borders are being patrolled by the English and French (neutrals), the loyalist borders are patrolled by Germans and Italians (belligerents).

*

IT SEEMS TO US THAT THE PRESS, IN PLAYING up the threat of taxation in Marriner Eccles's statement on inflation, missed its chief point. The Governor of the Reserve Board was not merely issuing a timely warning. He was establishing an alibi. He has just begun to realize that there are certain vital aspects of the price structure which cannot be controlled through changes in the rediscount rate or reserve requirements; aspects which respond rather to the controls exercised by ownership—by monopolies, patent pools, cartels. Mr. Eccles's statement was designed to establish this fact clearly in the public mind before it should become apparent, as our editorial in this issue on inflation indicates, that the machinery he operates is unable to check runaway prices. Unfortunately his purpose was thwarted by the newspapermen, who knew their public better than Mr. Eccles's purposes.

*

THE POPE'S ENCYCLICAL LETTER READ TO German Catholic congregations on the morning of Palm Sunday immediately provoked an angry reply from the Nazis. It may lead to the renunciation of the Concordat between Hitler and the Vatican. The vigor of the Pope's attack upon Nazi ideology and the bluntness of his charge that the German state has violated the Concordat contrast with the recent conciliatory pastoral letter of the German bishops, in which they were still pleading to be accepted as equal partners with the Nazis in their common fight against "communism." The change in tone was undoubtedly occasioned by the increasing prestige of the pagan religious movement within the Hitler government, for which the rising star of Himmler, the head of the secret police, is partly responsible. One possible reason for the increased power of the pagan forces within the government seems to be that the conservatives—Göring, Schacht, the army, *et al.*—who have beaten the more radical forces in the field of economics, have sought to appease the resentment of the radicals by giving them freer rein in the cultural field. The immediate effect of this development has been the increased pressure of the police upon Catholic parochial schools in contravention of the Concordat. The Pope's letter now places the Catholics in the same desperate opposition to the government in which the Protestant church already stands.

*

AN INCONSPICUOUS LITTLE BILL CALLING FOR the repeal of the Indian Reorganization Act has been slipped into the hopper by Senator Wheeler. As the original sponsor of that act Mr. Wheeler received due credit for the land reforms and communal development that have been effected since its adoption. Now, perhaps under pressure from Montana stockmen, he wants to kill the whole development. Until recently Indian lands were passing into white hands at the rate of about seven million acres a year. Particularly in the northern plains the areas owned by the Indians were so scattered that it was impossible to make use of them as grazing land. As a result the Indians were forced to lease these sections very disadvantageously to the white stockmen. Under the Reorganization Act most of this has been stopped. Many leases are being terminated and the tribes are using the range themselves. This change is beneficial to the country as well as to the Indians, since under federal guardianship it is possible to apply soil-conservation principles to areas which were being rapidly destroyed by over-grazing. The interests behind Senator Wheeler's bill are suspect and its purposes are questionable. It should not be allowed to reach the floor of the Senate.

*

THE TIDE OF LIBERALISM HAS RUN LOWER and lower in the Scripps-Howard press. At the moment the negotiations between the Newspaper Guild and the New York *World-Telegram,* which Roy Howard manages personally, have broken down on the issue of the Guild preferential—not the closed—shop. (The Guild shop would allow the *World-Telegram* to hire anyone it pleased so long as that person joined the Guild within a given period.) To be sure, there has been an advance. Formerly the *World-Telegram* had declared that it would negotiate only with its own employees; but the education of Roy Howard is apparently not yet complete. As we go to press the threat of a strike hangs over his head. The Guild has the backing of both John Lewis and William Green; and the typographers of New York City, as well as the members of other unions involved in getting out Mr. Howard's newspaper, are not men to pass a picket line. In trying to preserve the "freedom of the press," lest a Guild shop here set a bad example to provincial Scripps-Howard units, Mr. Howard is setting his face against a union town in which the large majority of his readers believe in collective bargaining. Is it possible that he will take the almost certain risk of having the *World-Telegram's* lighthouse put out of commission?

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JOHN H. CLARKE, FORMER LIBERAL MEMBER of the Supreme Court, proved last week over the radio that the President's proposal was perfectly legal. Charles E. Hughes, present Chief Justice, proved with equal force that without it the court could keep up with its schedule. We are ready to believe both. But both are side skirmishes in a larger battle. Legality is reassuring, but it only clears the ground for the question of social effectiveness, which is *not* synonymous with calendar efficiency. The country is not passing through the present throes of discussion in order to lighten the labor burden of the justices. In so far as Mr. Roosevelt has stressed that, he has given the whole matter an unfortunate emphasis. The real question is one of getting for the time being a workable democracy by tempering the unyielding rigor of the present court majority and by introducing a more vivid sense of social realities. For the long run only an amendment will avail.

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LEON TROTSKY WAS NO DOUBT STIRRED INTO making his press statement against André Malraux, which we print on another page, by Malraux's failure to comment on Trotsky's assertion that Malraux had visited him in southern France at the time he was accused of meeting Romm in Paris. While we may understand Trotsky's resentment, his gratuitous attack can only arouse indignation. The assertion that Malraux "carries the responsibility for the strangulation of the Chinese revolution" seems, if the statement is at all correctly quoted, fantastic. And everyone who has had any contact with Malraux in America knows not only that he is devoted to the Spanish United Front government but also that he has restricted himself severely to furthering its cause here. It is one of the tragic results of the controversy over the Moscow trials that it has produced dissension in causes where there should have been complete unity.

✶

THE RAILROADS DID NOT COME OUT BADLY in the compromise pension plan which has now been submitted for Congressional action. As a price for withdrawing their objections to a federal pension scheme they propose to unload upon the government the obligation which they have incurred under their private pension systems. It is estimated that this will save them approximately $36,000,000 in a single year, and assure an average saving of $14,000,000 to $15,000,000 a year over a long period. A slight reduction in the tax rate from the present railroad retirement law will save the roads about $8,000,000 additional each year. The sliding-scale tax rate proposed by the railroads and unions averages approximately 6.6 per cent as compared with the flat 7 per cent levy of the existing law—a rate which the Treasury insists ought to be maintained if the plan is to be self-sustaining. But perhaps the most interesting aspect of the agreement is the sudden discovery by the railroad management that federal pensions, which they had insisted were unconstitutional, become constitutional when they work to the financial benefit of the railroads. There seems to be a dollars-and-cents equivalent for constitutionality.

CAPTAIN WILHELM WEISS, ONE OF JOSEPH Goebbels's chief deputies, announced last week that art and theater critics, who in December were forbidden to function, could now resume their criticism—providing they did it in the form of political observations! He went on to outline the rights and duties of a critic in the Third Reich in a series of verbal contortions that reminded us of nothing so much as Robert Benchley's film version of the man with insomnia who changed his position fifty-seven times in one night. "What is Nazi is good; what is not Nazi is bad," began the Captain, settling down for a good night's rest. "We desire a respected and interesting German press," he continued, making a mild shift and arranging the covers, "and intend it to be a sure and powerful instrument in the *Führer's* hands." At this point he pulled the quilt over his head, thus uncovering his feet. "Art criticism," he declared, curling up defiantly, "is not primarily an aesthetic question but a political one." But "the art of observation does not differ from the former art of criticism, in heaven's name," shouted the acrobatic captain, getting up and turning the mattress. He ended in a final tailspin. "The old idea," he said, "that there is good art and bad art must be removed." We understand that this old idea, suspected of having a Jewish grandmother, has since been executed by a firing squad.

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Correction: Mr. Louis B. Wehle

[In its issue of January 23, 1937, *The Nation* published an article by Paul W. Ward on the Tennessee power situation containing several references to Mr. Louis B. Wehle which subsequent disclosures have shown to be somewhat inaccurate and unfair in their implications. In justice to Mr. Wehle, the following statement of facts is made.

As to Mr. Wehle's credentials for acting in the situation: At the President's request Mr. Wehle was present at the White House power-pooling conference in September, 1936, and subsequently acted as mediator between the TVA and the Commonwealth and Southern Corporation in arriving at the terms of a status quo agreement. When this agreement was concluded, the parties recited their appreciation of the efforts of Mr. Wehle, as the President's designee, in cooperating with the parties.

As to Mr. Wehle's connection with railroad reorganization: Mr. Wehle, after having published an article in the December, 1934, *Yale Law Journal* on Railroad Reorganizations under the Bankruptcy Act, was retained by the Prudential Insurance Company for the purpose of drafting and urging legislation on that subject. The retainer was terminable at any time by either party, and Mr. Wehle was left free to express his own views as to public policy and to disclose to officials in Washington the existence of the retainer. In the course of his subsequent activities under the retainer, Mr. Wehle, on his own initiative, fully disclosed its terms to the RFC and others with whom he dealt.

The Nation regrets that its correspondent did not have the foregoing information at the time of the writing of his article.]

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Making Sitdowns Legal

NEVER in our memory has anything happened in America that so completely illumines the uses of law in our society as the controversy over the sitdown strike. The speed with which the sitdown has spread in the highly industrial states shows of course that it is deeply related to a felt need among our workers. It is this need, arising not only out of specific grievances but out of the whole position of the workers in our economy, that prompted the Chrysler strikers to address their magnificent open letter to Governor Murphy. It is this need which prompts their continued defiance of Judge Campbell's injunction. And the response of the law itself to this need is a stiff-necked assertion of illegality.

Let us not be misunderstood. Given the law as it stands, interpreted narrowly, there can be little doubt that the sitdown is illegal. There have been those who have urged the opposite, and we have ourselves pointed to the property rights that a worker has in his job. But it is terribly important to make a distinction here. Are we talking about the law that *exists* or the law that *is emerging?* If we take Justice Holmes's excellent behavioristic definition of law—"law is what the courts are likely to decide"—and if we couple that with what we know about most American judges today, the answer is clear. We could, of course, write an editorial on what the judges *should* decide. Or we could ruminate on what *we* should decide if we were judges. But the hard reality is that we are not.

Unless we make this distinction, we obscure the uses of law in social struggles and the manner in which law grows. Law at any given period is a crystallization of past growths and past struggles. It is a response to the felt impulsions of the past. In America today our law reflects the desperate need for protecting property in a rapidly growing, mushrooming frontier society that turned in an amazingly brief span of time into the most highly developed capitalist state in the world. It reflects also the fears that our industrialists felt when faced by the growth of trade unionism and democratic feeling. This need and these fears have been written—have written themselves—into the law. The use of the injunction in the past, even more than today, as a strike-breaking weapon is a prime example of how law can be used to favor one side in the capital-labor relationship. Today such a use of the injunction is illegal in sixteen states and in the federal courts. And not only the injunction. The strike itself was once illegal. It is now, in theory at least, legal. The labor boycott was illegal. It is now, under certain circumstances, legal. Picketing was once illegal. It is now legal. Mass picketing was once illegal. It is now generally legal. What we call "the law" has on these subjects changed as social realities have somehow got themselves into peoples' heads and become recognized as realities.

The "law" on the sitdown will also change—is, in fact, changing under our very hands. Judges are human, and even judges are not entirely impervious to realities outside the courtroom. Judge Campbell spoke more softly than Judge Gadola before him: the next judge will speak more softly than Judge Campbell. For they will come to understand that there is more in the heaven and earth of the sitdown than is dreamt of in the doctrine of simple trespass. You do not dispose of the controversy between the Chrysler corporation and its workers by recourse to an eighteenth-century idea of private property. Such a controversy is infinitely involved. On its settlement depend not only the livelihoods of thousands, even of millions, but the social health of the state. Whoever you are—judge, corporation head, newspaper publisher—you must recognize that the stake these workers have in their livelihoods and the stake the nation has in healthy and decent industrial conditions are far greater than your narrow and static legalism. You cannot chase these men out as you would chase out a trespasser from your back yard.

Even on the score of strict legality, the total case is far from clear. Every day, throughout the nation, the corporate employers are breaking laws in their struggle against collective bargaining. Every day the Labor Relations Board is defied, labor spies are used, men are discharged for union activities. Every day police brutality is used to smash strikes and break up picket lines. Two wrongs, of course, do not make a right. But we cite these facts because we are convinced that the objection of the corporations to the sitdown is not that it is illegal but that it levels out the immense advantage they have thus far had in the bargaining struggle. That is what they cannot endure—not the trespass, but the fact that they are now compelled to put their houses in order and accept the workers' demands for collective bargaining.

In legal terms the sitdown must therefore be seen as part of the no man's land where the law is, except in the narrowest and most mechanical sense, still undetermined. In such an area the considerations that should be decisive are those leading to a decent living standard for all.

"Spain in Flames"

WE THOUGHT the name of A. Mitchell Palmer had gone down—as far down as it deserves—in history. But it has turned up again in an ominous connection. Mrs. A. Mitchell Palmer is chairman of the Board of Censors of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, which ruled on February 16 that the people of that great industrial state would not be allowed to look at "Spain in Flames," a film dealing with the Spanish civil war, unless changes were made which would effectively stop distribution of the picture. "Spain in Flames" was edited in the United States. The dialogue was written by John Dos Passos and Archibald MacLeish. Since it is a newsreel type of film, it does not fall within the jurisdiction of censorship boards, but when it was scheduled for exhibition in Philadelphia, the Board of Censors asked to see it, and it was submitted as a matter of courtesy. The board held it for a week. Finally telegrams from Dos Passos and MacLeish brought forth this extraordinary—and extra-legal—ruling: "You may show this film in Pennsylvania only if you change the sound track so that every mention of the word fascist or fascism

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is eliminated." Needless to say, the cost of making a complete new sound track would be prohibitive.

It is not surprising that "Spain in Flames," which has been seen by thousands in some sixty American cities, is too red for a lady bearing the name of A. Mitchell Palmer. The *news* is, however, that Governor Earle, liberal, aspirant for the White House, and as they say in Pittsburgh "a rich man who rose to be a friend of labor," out-Palmered Mrs. Palmer. Without haggling over sound tracks or the word fascism he summarily ordered the film barred from Pennsylvania. "This picture," said Governor Earle, "is pure communistic propaganda. . . . We Pennsylvanians are not interested in the propaganda of a government largely made up of Communists, Syndicalists, and Anarchists who butcher priests . . . it definitely encourages recruiting."

It is difficult to understand how a politician as shrewd as Governor Earle could have permitted himself the luxury of expressing his real feelings so openly. It is *not* difficult to get at the real reasons why "Spain in Flames" has been barred from Pennsylvania. Catholic influence is strong and is throwing its whole weight against the Spanish government. Moreover, Pennsylvania is inhabited by thousands of working people, many of them of European ancestry. In the thoughtful darkness of a moving-picture theater they might well recognize, as they looked at "Spain in Flames," that the Spanish workers and peasants are defending their very lives against the same forces that are aligned against poor men in Pennsylvania. In Spain it has come to open war. In Pennsylvania the thousands of industrial workers are only beginning to realize that their labor has created the wealth with which their bosses have been able to keep them under, and that the Catholic church has been one of the most dependable and well-rewarded allies of industry.

"Spain in Flames" has met a similar fate in Ohio, probably for similar reasons. But unlike Governor Earle, Governor Davey has carefully avoided the issue. The Cleveland *Press* and other papers have been waging a lively fight on the stupidity of censorship—so far to no avail. Legal action is now being taken by the sponsors of the film, the North American Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy; and the American Civil Liberties Union is planning to introduce legislation at the next session of the Ohio legislature to change the sound track of the Board of Censorship.

Legal action is also under way in Pennsylvania to force the Board of Censors and Governor Earle to rescind orders which have no basis in law. An even more effective protest could be made by the most progressive force now operating in the states of Pennsylvania and Ohio. We refer to the Committee for Industrial Organization. It is the workers of Pennsylvania and Ohio whom the board of censors have in mind when they oppose the showing of "Spain in Flames." It is the workers of America, above all others, who should understand events now happening in Spain. The C. I. O. is directly concerned, and John Lewis, who gave notice at Madison Square Garden last week that he realizes the meaning of fascism, should make the first protest.

The Clichy Riot

IF WARNING were needed to show what might happen to France if the Popular Front government fell, such a warning was delivered in the fatal rioting at Clichy last week. Early press reports received in this country placed the blame of course on the Communists. It was alleged that the Communists, led by their representatives in the Chamber of Deputies, had deliberately attacked and broken up a peaceful theater showing staged by De la Rocque's newly established Social Party, which was under the protection of government police. This version of the affair does not, however, coincide with the reports of post-riot activities. It does not explain why all 5 of the persons killed in the riot and most of the 300 wounded were Communists or Communist sympathizers, or why the chief outcry against the riot has come from organized workers and the left political parties rather than from the supposedly aggrieved fascists. Moreover, if the government had really sent large detachments of police to protect the fascists, it is difficult to see why it should now threaten to prosecute De la Rocque for illegal political activity in holding the meeting.

Despite these press distortions, there can be little doubt that De la Rocque and his followers were largely, if not primarily, responsible for the whole affair. They called the meeting in the heart of Paris's "red belt" with the deliberate intention of provoking the Communists. They apparently went to the meeting well equipped with pistols and other weapons for "self-defense." Only an omniscient investigating committee can determine who started the fighting or who fired the first shot. But the blame must obviously rest chiefly on those who laid the plans for the demonstration with full knowledge of its probable fatal outcome.

If De la Rocque hoped that by instigating this riot he would plunge France into a period of disorder from which he would profit, he has been bitterly disappointed. Instead of weakening the Popular Front government, the riot appears to have frightened all the left groups into a new solidarity. Although the Communists were irritated with Blum for allowing a fascist demonstration in a working-class district, they have not wavered in their support of the Popular Front. After weathering a financial crisis at the beginning of the month and overcoming the political repercussion of the Clichy riots, the Blum government should enter its second year with greater vitality than it possessed at the beginning of the first year. The defense loan has been oversubscribed, and labor difficulties are on the wane. When the passivity of the right following the Clichy affair is contrasted with the clamor aroused by the February riots in 1934, the danger of an immediate fascist coup seems unusually remote.

The fact still remains, however, that events in France are bound to be influenced substantially by developments in Spain. A victory for Franco, Hitler, and Mussolini at Madrid would undoubtedly encourage the French right to new audacity in an effort to create the sort of disturbances on which fascism feeds. A continuation of the recent set-

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backs to the international fascists, on the other hand, will almost certainly spare France the necessity of passing through the horrors in which Spain is now engulfed. Fascism thrives on glamor and success. Once the myth of its irresistible power is shattered, it will have lost its primary appeal to the masses. A fascism dependent solely on the class interests of a minority of wealthy reactionaries is dead as a political movement. Clichy represents a reversal for French fascism, but Madrid will determine the final outcome.

Inflation Is Here

THE general public thinks of inflation as a wild speculative orgy in which the printing presses turn out tons of money in ever-increasing denominations. This, of course, is characteristic of the final stage of an uncontrolled inflationary movement. But to an economist an inflation is merely a period in which there is a steady shrinkage in the purchasing power of money. From this point of view there can be no doubt that we are already well along in an inflationary period. As is usually the case with inflations, the rise in prices was gradual at first. From the low point in 1933 to the early fall of 1936, wholesale commodity prices rose only 25 per cent. The prices of manufactured articles, after a sharp rise in the summer of 1933, remained practically stationary until the last quarter of 1936.

Since the end of October wholesale prices have risen an additional 9.2 per cent, making a total increase of 15 per cent in the past year. The price of finished steel products has advanced 25 per cent in the past twelve months and 39 per cent since the depth of the depression. This advance may be compared with a 44 per cent increase in 1922-23 and a 39 per cent rise in 1919-20, years which are now recognized as inflationary periods. It is doubly significant in view of the fact that iron and steel prices declined only about 25 per cent in the depression.

Here is unmistakable evidence that a period of inflation has begun. Where it will end no one can say. Once prices start skyrocketing, a vicious circle is joined. The increase in the prices of raw materials necessitates a rise in the prices of finished products. This leads to higher living costs and demands for higher wages, which in turn furnish a pretext for a further boost in prices. Meanwhile, stockholders and speculators are the chief beneficiaries.

While Secretary Wallace may have been overstating it when he declared that the government lacked power to control "the wide swings of the business cycle," he would have been on sound ground if he had merely said that the devices with which the inflationary boom might be checked are dangerous and politically inexpedient. If the Reserve banks divested themselves of the two billion dollars' worth of government bonds now in their vaults and raised the rediscount rate, while the government sold its stock of excess silver and curtailed emergency expenditures, the boom could be checked. But in the process we might easily find ourselves in the throes of a new depression. If the present rate of economic activity is to be maintained and expanded, it is essential, as J. M. Keynes recently pointed out, to keep interest rates at or near their present low levels. Emergency expenditures cannot be curtailed without grave injustice to the underprivileged groups in the country. What is needed is not some method of destroying the purchasing power of the ten million still unemployed but a device which will reduce the excess funds of the very wealthy.

The only satisfactory curb on inflation, as Marriner S. Eccles, chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, has stated, would be heavier taxes on high- and middle-income groups and an increase in the levy on corporation profits. An unbalanced budget is necessary in a depression in order to maintain mass purchasing power, but during a boom the budget should be balanced and the indebtedness incurred in the slump retired. Very little reduction can be made in government expenditures at this time; so if the budget is to be balanced, it must be through increased taxation.

If taxes are to be raised, legislation should be adopted at this session of Congress. Even if this is done, the taxes on this year's income will not be payable until next March. By that time the boom may be fully upon us. If action is put off until the next year, the new levies cannot come into force until 1939, which would be much too late. It may even be that an increase in taxes on luxury goods will be necessary in order to make certain that they become operative in time to be of value. Once an inflation reaches the runaway stage, it is too late to use ordinary taxation as a check.

In discussions of the threatened inflation in the daily press much has been said about the regulation of prices and wages. This strikes us as a deliberate attempt to arouse public opinion against the Administration. Some commentators have even gone so far as to say that the President is anxious to push through his Supreme Court proposal in order to obtain dictatorial power which will enable him to regulate prices and wages. Apart from the political absurdity of the charge, there is no basis in history for the belief that a government can control prices and wages in an inflationary period. Many such attempts have been made in the past, and none has been successful when the incidence of inflation was really marked. Minimum-wage laws are just and desirable in a period of stable prices, but they are meaningless in an inflation. Even more refined methods, such as attempting to fix wages in terms of the cost of living, are bound to prove unenforceable. Mr. Roosevelt is undoubtedly aware of these facts, and there is nothing in the statements issued by his Cabinet officers to suggest that he intends to use any but the most orthodox methods of checking the threatened runaway rise in prices. Back of the charges against the President lies the undeniable fact that most of the men who control the country's economic power do not want to head off a boom—least of all by an increase in taxation. If "dictatorship" is to be feared in coming months, it is the dictatorship of these men—the same group that prevented effective action in 1928-29.

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WASHINGTON WEEKLY

BY PAUL W. WARD

Washington, March 21

THERE'S a new deal in store for the American farmer and the power trust now that Morris L. Cooke has got out of the Rural Electrification Administration and John M. Carmody has taken his place at the REA's helm. As a part of that new deal a shake-up in REA personnel impends, a shake-up that involves ridding the agency of several key men who obviously believe God never intended to have rural America electrified unless the latter-day Insulls and Hopsons first gave their consent and were guaranteed a flat share in the resulting tolls. Despite a contrary dogma in the REA act they have sworn to support, they have practiced their own peculiar religion so assiduously that the REA stands today as one of the most complete failures among all the Roosevelt Administration's undertakings. The public-ownership movement which produced it has been sabotaged, millions of dollars have been wasted, valuable time has been lost, and, worst of all, public or cooperative rural electrification projects have been thwarted or otherwise held in check until private power companies killed them by running spite lines into the project areas or by skimming off the cream of the prospective business there.

Carmody, who has been successively chief engineer of the Civil Works Administration, a member of the Railway Mediation Board, and a member of the National Labor Relations Board, intends to change all that and to restore the REA to the course its legislative godfather, Senator Norris, charted for it. He signalized his intention yesterday by driving down to Warsaw, Virginia, and putting on a show in which, for the first time in the agency's history, the farmers instead of the power magnates were treated as the REA's clients. At the request of the farmers down in Virginia's Northern Neck, he held a public hearing in the Warsaw courthouse and gave them a chance to tell him face to face what they thought of the way his predecessor had treated them. For seven years the farmers in that part of Virginia which gave us Washington and Lee have been trying to get electricity. Despairing of getting it through the private power company in the area, they formed a cooperative a few months ago and applied to the REA for a loan so that the cooperative might build and operate its own transmission lines and if necessary generate its own power. Instead of granting that application the REA a few days later allotted $125,000 to the Virginia East Coast Utilities Company for a rural transmission line in the area, and Administrator Cooke, under date of February 2 last, advised the farmers that if the company's line was not going to extend into the same area for which their project had been planned, they had better "take the matter up direct with the company."

This action was taken in plain contradiction of a section of the REA act which stipulates that preference must be given to public, non-profit, and cooperative agencies rather than to private concerns. The fact that the private company to which the allotment was made is only now emerging from its second bankruptcy makes the contradiction even plainer, for it erases any ground for argument that the company was a better credit risk than the cooperative. The cooperative alleges that Cooke approved the allotment to the company on January 29 "on the recommendation of his chief counsel, Vincent D. Nicholson, and his head engineer, Willard E. Herring." Carmody promptly put a stop order against the allotment to the Virginia East Coast Utilities Company, and it is now indicated that the money will go to the cooperative.

The Virginia episode is merely symptomatic of what has been going on inside the REA from the beginning. Cooke, who took charge of the agency when it was first set up in 1935 as part of the $4,880,000,000 emergency relief program, has never been able to bring himself around to the public-ownership point of view. Despite his long experience with the power trust, he has clung to his belief that private-profit enterprise is best and that the boys who run the power industry can be trusted to advance the public interest. He insisted that the private companies be allowed a share in the REA benefits, when Norris wanted to bar them. He insisted that public and cooperative agencies under the program should not be favored to the point of letting them compete with private companies, when Norris wanted to draw the act so that the REA might finance such competition. And he was so anxious for the REA to be "safe and sane" that he staffed it to the rooftree with "safe and sane" lawyers and engineers such as Nicholson and Herring. They have made no secret of their disbelief in public ownership of power developments and of their scorn for cooperatives. Nicholson, in fact, when the permanent REA was pending in Congress, worked with Representative Huddleston of Alabama to get into the bill the little clauses that have been the safeguards of the private companies, and at least one member of the legal division is known to have written an official of the notorious H. C. Hopson's Associated Gas and Electric System advising that official to call him at night at his home because he could talk more freely with him there than at the REA's offices. This is especially strange in view of the fact that Associated officials from the beginning have seemed to feel peculiarly at home in the REA offices. They have been treated with such deference there that under Cooke's regime they got six different REA loans, totaling $876,450; and the loans were slipped through with such extraordinary celerity that, contrary to regulations, the REA'S development division was not given an opportunity to scrutinize the projects involved.

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Under the leadership of Nicholson, a Philadelphia Brahman-Quaker formerly with the NRA's legal division, who apparently possessed a strange power to make Cooke alter decisions after the administration had reached them on the basis of a conference with the heads of all the REA divisions, the REA's legal battery has placed every conceivable impediment in the path of rural electrification along any lines save those pleasing to the private companies. Isolated by training and experience from the public point of view, they have approached REA projects from a purely legalistic and banker angle. They have insisted that the farmers' own small-town lawyers were not capable of drawing up the necessary charters and contracts. They have insisted that these jobs be intrusted to big corporation law firms. Quite typically, one of their first choices was the Minnesota law firm of Butler, Mitchell, and Doherty, from which Justice Pierce Butler sprang; that choice was nipped in the bud by a little quick work on the part of Minnesota's Farmer-Labor Governor. The REA's legal division has devoted itself to finding endless, niggling fault with the project plans for cooperatives and to vetoing these almost unprecedented undertakings because the law records with respect to private utilities provide no precedents for them.

For every little trick of obfuscation and delay that the REA's legal division has employed against public projects a parallel can be found in the engineering division under Herring, another Philadelphian, who incidentally was such a power in the REA while Cooke was in command that the words "For the Administrator" appeared under his signature on hundreds of letters. Just as the legal division has insisted on selecting lawyers for the applicants, so the engineering division has insisted on choosing their technical advisers and managers. Cooperatives also have found frequent cause to protest against the engineering division's fanatical insistence on dictating construction specification details, such as requiring the use of aluminum wire where copper would be cheaper and more durable and demanding that the cooperative use poles which must be imported from other states when local materials would be cheaper and equally serviceable.

The worst feature of it all has been that the legal and engineering divisions have expanded their jurisdictions to include the economic feasibility of projects. Under Cooke, Messrs. Herring and Nicholson acquired absolute veto power over projects on this score. Some strange decisions resulted. The Dyess colony in Arkansas, with a million dollars cash in the bank, put in an REA project application. An REA lawyer advised its rejection because he had examined the colony's charter and could find nothing in it to prevent the colony's directors from paying dividends to themselves at some future date. The colony started as an FERA project and all its stock is held by Harry Hopkins as trustee for the government. When this initial legal hurdle was topped, the REA's legal and engineering divisions decided that the project was not economically feasible; in short, it was too great a risk for the government to do business with itself. Since the FERA's successor, the WPA, has a little more influence in Washington than the ordinary farm cooperative, this hurdle too has finally been topped and the colony's application approved.

How Not to Plan Public Housing

BY LANGDON W. POST

THE fact that we finally have a small amount of public housing in the United States, after fifty years of agitation against slums, is not the result of any real general awakening to the need for it. We have it simply because the government decided to spend money for public works to help us out of the depression. It is important to remember this, because it helps to explain why, more than three years after the first funds were allocated, we still have no real program and no firm acceptance of housing as a public responsibility.

The Public Works Administration has constructed or is constructing in forty cities projects which will accommodate not quite 25,000 families. The Resettlement Administration is building a few greenbelt towns which may take a few additional thousands of families from our city slums. These are called demonstration projects, and to a certain extent they are. The PWA and the RA have set admirable standards, and the physical existence of the projects does help to focus attention on the problem and to create a demand for further efforts. The RA should also help us to discover whether or not the garden communities which have been so successful in England and other parts of Europe can be satisfactorily adapted to the United States. But neither has pointed the way to the long-range program which should ultimately eliminate all of our bad housing.

This is not to any great extent the fault of officials in Washington. The RA, handicapped by adverse court decisions, local opposition, complete lack of precedents, and the necessity of devoting most of its efforts to other matters, has done what it could. The PWA Housing Division has had similar difficulties, and in addition has been under the unfortunate compulsion to fit its program into the fixed formula of loans, grants, and interest rates set up by Congress for all types of public works. Proper planning has had to be subordinated to the rigid requirements of the formula. Thus, instead of choosing sites and plans on the basis of greatest advantage to the cities in which projects were to be located, the Housing Division, and cooperating local authorities where they existed, has

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had to select sites where the land cost did not exceed a certain amount, and to fix the size of projects chiefly on the basis of the total amount of money available and the proportion which could properly be allocated to any given city. This is obviously going at the whole problem backward.

As a matter of fact, the cost approach is the primary trouble with all housing in this country, private as well as public. The individual builder, in order to obtain the maximum return on his investment, almost always puts as many rooms on a given piece of property as he is allowed to. This has resulted not only in the tenements of the slums but also in the fantastic apartments of the well-to-do, sixteen stories or more in height, with a density per acre and a lack of natural light and ventilation which are shocking. It is literally true that the most important part of an architect's work in our cities has been to produce maximum floor space with minimum expense, pressing as closely as possible upon the requirements of local laws. Design for comfort, health, and safety is always secondary. And of course the laws have been generous, to say the least.

This same preoccupation with economy at the expense of standards has been carried over into public housing. During the past three years I have examined hundreds of proposals for solving the slum problem. Almost every one has involved some chiseling below proper standards, just as the prize design in the famous 1879 tenement-house competition actually resulted in greater coverage and congestion. Architects of good reputation have seriously urged us to relax the present inadequate laws regulating construction and coverage. Others assure us that the simple solution is to buy land in outlying districts, completely disregarding the effect which this would have on the rest of the city. Virtually none of the plans I have seen has been centered directly on the problems of good housing and proper city planning.

I do not mean to suggest that we should be careless in the expenditure of public money, or that we should not avail ourselves of every possible economy. But we must examine all aspects of the situation and not merely initial price. It seems strangely difficult to make people realize that site and construction costs of public housing are only two of many factors which enter into the ultimate cost to the community. Particularly the expense of other public services must be taken into consideration. At present, as studies in many cities have shown, we are subsidizing slums. Our cities spend more for police, health, schools, fire protection, streets, sanitation, transportation facilities, and other benefits to the occupants of slum property than that property ever returns in taxes. This might well be true under any circumstances for people in the lower-income groups, but it is dubious economic sense to spend this money so that rents can be maintained, even at low levels, in privately owned buildings. On the other hand, tax assessment of slum property is usually above the actual value of such property figured by return on investment.

To put it in another way, our municipal bookkeeping as related to residential real estate is unrealistic to a high

degree. The planlessness, the bad housing, and a host of other evils in slum areas are perhaps properly blamed on years of real-estate speculation. But the present situation is due not nearly so much to speculative values as to the freezing of such values through mortgage and tax structures. We find in New York, for example, contrary to the general opinion, that very few of our bad tenements are owned by large estates or speculators. Those owned by banks have all been acquired involuntarily through foreclosure. Most of them are still nominally owned by comparatively poor individuals who have bought them with their life savings, not as a speculation but as an investment. Most of these owners would be delighted to sell for the amount of the city's assessment, or less. Many of the properties could be bought for the amount of the mortgage. The price would still be too high if the districts were restricted to properly limited residential use, and then evaluated in terms of fair return on prudent investment. The prices must come down. But any effort to force the price of slum property down to a level comparable to outlying vacant land would ruin thousands of poor owners dependent upon their property for a living, would embarrass many of our savings banks, and to a lesser degree would upset the cities' tax structure.

I certainly would not defend the ridiculously high price of land in our cities. It may be that in some cases we shall have to say that so far as the owner is concerned, it is just too bad, and break the prices. But such a solution involves grave consequences, and it is no service to the cause of public housing to jump at it as a panacea, either through drastic zoning laws or by draining slum population into outlying districts.

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Even more important from the planning standpoint is the fact that our cities now have substantial investments in schools, fire and police stations, and other public facilities in the slum areas. Heretofore, while cities have been expanding rapidly, we have given comparatively little thought to the desirability of opening up new subdivisions provided with public facilities. We have had to have them, and they have been provided, with an assessment against the improved property to cover part of the cost. Population expansion involves necessary expense which is ultimately returned in greater wealth for the whole community. But now that population is tending to become stabilized, we must examine this question in a new light. It is true that we face a national shortage of decent housing and must expand somewhat further; but it is also true that we are entering a period when replacement is more important than expansion, and we must readjust our city plans on that basis. It was bad enough to allow the cities to grow without plan and without restriction; it would involve even more waste and economic dislocation to shift them about planlessly after they are grown, building up new districts at the expense of those already established.

Some shifts will undoubtedly be desirable to permit people to live closer to the places where they work, and to provide the additional park and playground space which we need. (If we get a universal six-hour day, it may not be quite so bad to have millions of workers spending two hours a day getting to and from the places where they are employed. But it still seems to me a ridiculous waste both of time and transportation cost.) But it would be the height of folly to shift our slum dwellers to outlying areas simply because our housing program was tied down to a formula which made it necessary to build on cheap land.

The possibilities of using slum areas for good housing have also received insufficient attention. It is true that in Harlem and parts of the lower East Side in Manhattan there is a congestion which must be alleviated. But such a condition prevails in far less than half of New York City's seventeen square miles of slums, and is even less prevalent elsewhere. In the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn, for example, the New York City Housing Authority and the PWA have demolished twelve blocks of squalid tenements, which covered from 80 to 90 per cents of the lots on which they were built. There was no play space except in the streets. On this site we are building four-story brick buildings, covering less than thirty per cent of the gross area, in which there will be apartments for about two hundred more families than were moved out of the area. There will be ample community facilities, including a high school occupying one block with its playground occupying another. In addition, there will be open courts larger than any now existing in the city, additional playgrounds for smaller children, and light and air in every room. Such slum areas do not need to be moved or expanded, they need to be redesigned.

On the other side of the picture, we have our new commercial and semi-commercial apartment buildings, such as London Terrace and Knickerbocker Village in New York. High buildings of this type are apparently necessary to return a profit on high-priced land. But if we were to build up only the lower East Side, a fraction of the area of Manhattan, in this fashion, we could house the whole population of New York City. If we leave our slums to themselves, we shall face either such a ruinous prospect or continuing blight in the hearts of cities.

Looked at in another way, no initial-cost formula for housing really makes sense anyway. New buildings should be planned to last a minimum of fifty or sixty years, and we do not really expect the value of money to remain constant for any such length of time. Wages and prices have exhibited a long-term rise which will probably continue. The family which now pays five dollars per room per month may be able to pay ten dollars twenty years from now. Or if there is a shift the other way, it may be able to pay only two or three dollars. The rental of public housing should obviously be based on ability to pay, not on a fixed interest rate or, as in private housing, on what the traffic will bear.

Fundamentally, the purpose of public housing is to raise the standard of living for the underprivileged and to help to eliminate the evils of crime, disease, juvenile delinquency, and bad citizenship which are the concomitants of bad housing. Our national history has shown a gradual broadening of public responsibility for the welfare of citizens, and we have seen the government take over schools, roads, parks, health service, and many other activities in the public interest, without taking cost as the primary consideration. We are now beginning to realize that government should make itself responsible for seeing that every family has a decent place in which to live.

In undertaking this responsibility we must decide first what standards are necessary to achieve the desired results, and those must be rigidly maintained. A public housing program could not properly be justified simply because it gave people homes which were a little better than the ones they had before. Its purpose is to provide good housing for a long time, not to meet an emergency. After we have set these minimum standards, we can decide how much above them we can afford to go. There, and there only, cost should be taken into consideration. And even then the cost should be figured not on the basis of preconceptions about interest rates or the amount of subsidy but simply on the condition of the public purse and the proportion of income we wish to spend for housing.

Finally, we do not want to standardize homes. Housing is a public duty, not a charity, and it will not be good if we take the attitude that the tenants should accept what they get and like it, or that we can design an ideal, universal home. Some people may prefer suburban homes with gardens; some will prefer city apartments. There should be real opportunity for choice. The horrid word regimentation has been made a silly bugaboo by the tories. Nevertheless, there are real dangers in regimentation, and we should avoid it in public housing. We must remember that the houses we build are intended for homes.

[*Langdon W. Post is Tenement House Commissioner and Chairman of the Housing Authority of New York City.*]

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Keeping America Out of War

BY LOUIS FISCHER

THE prevention of war ought to be the purpose of American foreign policy. It is not. Our chief goal seems to be to keep out of a war once it has begun. This course is not only selfish; it is dangerous. If a major war breaks out, there is at least a chance, I think a very strong chance, that we shall be drawn in, all our neutrality legislation and pacifist sentiment notwithstanding. But if there were no war anywhere, we should be sure of peace. The only safe peace for the United States is universal peace.

If a European or Far Eastern war were surely coming in the near future and if it were possible to remain aloof I should say: Let us insulate and isolate ourselves. Let us try to be neutral. But I believe that American neutrality increases the likelihood of foreign war. It increases accordingly the likelihood of our becoming involved in a war. A wise American foreign policy could prevent widespread war. It could achieve this without risking a single man or gun. Our much-vaunted neutrality, on the other hand, is a complicated, costly, unpractical effort which is sure to defeat its aim. Neutrality is the best encouragement to aggressors.

It has often been pointed out that if in July, 1914, Sir Edward Grey, the British Foreign Minister, had made it unmistakably clear that England would rush to the aid of France in case of an attack, Germany might not have started the war. The possibility that Britain might remain neutral encouraged the Kaiser. A government launches a war in the hope of winning, and when a war-bent nation sees only a puny combination of forces aligned against it, it is more likely to strike. Were Hitler certain today that England and America would stay out, the second world war would be immeasurably nearer.

The neutrality advocated by American isolationists plays directly into Hitler's hands. He does not want collective security. On the contrary, when hostilities break out between two states, he would have "the other nations withdraw at once from both sides." That is his idea of neutrality, and he advocates it because it would facilitate his military successes. In a given dispute only the aggressor and the attacked nation fight. The others are neutral. Germany marches into Czecho-Slovakia, for instance. Russia, France, and England remain neutral. Germany wins the war. Germany would probably win all bilateral wars in which other powers remained neutral.

The basic idea of American neutrality is a misconception. It is assumed that we shall do nothing. But it is possible to do a great deal by doing nothing. The sitdown strike has proved that. By stopping still in our tracks, by not fighting in the war, we may actually determine its outcome. Just as nature abhors a vacuum, so international affairs make neutrality a physical impossibility.

During the Italian conquest of Abyssinia we were neutral. We could not, therefore, withhold oil shipments from Mussolini. He used our petrol to operate the airplanes which sprayed the Ethiopians with poison gas. He thus won the war. We were neutral, but we helped the aggressor toward victory.

The United States government presumably is also neutral in the Spanish civil war. We take no sides. That is the official formula. The reality is that while Franco has been receiving from Germany and Italy all the arms he can use as well as tens of thousands of trained troops in compact infantry units, the legitimate government of Spain, which has every right under international law to buy munitions everywhere, cannot receive them in sufficient quantities. What Franco cannot get from Germany and Italy he finds in the United States. The British freighter Linaria recently arrived in this country to take on a load of nitrate for Franco's munitions industries; and the Baltimore *Sun* of March 1 reported the docking in Baltimore of the British freighter Statira with 8,500 tons of copper ore from Huelva in rebel Spain. We paid for that ore and thus strengthened Franco's finances. Moreover, Germany and Italy, which officially are not belligerents, can buy arms here in endless quantities and ship them to Franco, their ally. No neutrality legislation proposes to deal with such a situation. We are guided by technicalities and legalities instead of by realities. All American neutrality programs open the road wide to discrimination.

In the case of the war in Spain, it is the legitimate government which suffers. One of the reasons for the arms shortage in loyalist Spain is our own arms embargo, clamped down hastily and in mysterious circumstances. We are thus to blame, along with other democratic countries, for the almost daily bombing and wounding and killing of thousands of women and children in Madrid and elsewhere in loyalist Spain. The embargo could make us partially responsible for the defeat of the legitimate government and the triumph of the rebels. That would be a victory not alone for Franco, who represents few Spaniards and depends entirely on what he gets from sources outside Spain. It would be a victory for Hitler and Mussolini to which we had contributed. Spain must not be regarded as an isolated phenomenon. It is part of a chain of major events which began in Manchuria in 1931 when the Japanese occupied that rich territory and includes the rape of Ethiopia and Hitler's coup of March 7, 1936, remilitarizing the Rhineland. Spain is a sequel to all these fascist successes. If it too becomes a fascist success there is every reason to expect that the fascist powers will seek other fields to conquer. Why should they not grab as long as the grabbing is good? Spain has become

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the key to Europe's future. If democracy is crushed in Spain, the fascists will be encouraged in France and elsewhere, and Rome and Berlin will be convinced that they can with impunity continue their campaigns against small states. The turn of the larger states will come later.

Peace will not be obtained by talking, or by yearning for peace, or by describing the horrors of past and future wars. The only way to guarantee peace is to stop the fascist aggressors who alone want war. It can still be done in Spain. If Hitler and Mussolini are checked there, they will be weakened and sobered. Europe will have a breathing space of a year or more. In that period certain social processes eating at the vitals of Germany and Italy will have further undermined their strength, whereas France, England, and Russia will be more powerful. The truce in Europe which would follow upon Franco's failure in Spain might postpone for a decade or more the second world war which we all dread so much and whose cost in lives and property would make the war of 1914-18 look like a child's game. If the United States helped the Spanish government to win, we might have peace during this generation. But we are neutral. We therefore have no foreign policy in peace time. We merely have a neutrality policy for war time. It is a policy which makes it pretty sure that there will be a war time.

The cash-and-carry principle introduced into legislation now pending in both houses of Congress is the very negation of neutrality. It means that the nation which has cash and the ships to carry can buy here in war time to its heart's content. That nation might be a potential enemy of the United States. It might be engaged in a flagrant and unwarranted attack on another country. Yet we should be helping it. That is not neutrality. Nor is there neutrality in complete abstention from trade with belligerents. Such complete abstention, be it noted, is not proposed in the neutrality bills. It would hurt American business too much. But suppose we did refuse to buy from or sell to any participant in a war. Some of the participants might have prepared fully for the war in advance. The victims of aggression might not be prepared. The former would not need our supplies. The latter would. By withholding munitions we should be confirming the advantage of the aggressors. We should by doing nothing help one side to win.

No matter how we look at the problem of our relationship to peace and the next war, neutrality is not the solution. We were never neutral in the war between the Allies and the German quadruple alliance. After April, 1917, we simply gave more arms and more money and also men. It is one of the greatest fallacies of American political thinking to suppose that we went into the war in 1917 chiefly because J. P. Morgan had invested in the Allies and wanted to save his investments. Morgan invested in the Allies because the interests of this country were pro-Ally. We could never have allowed Germany to win the war. When there was a danger that it would, we dropped the fiction of non-participation and became an active belligerent. Nor are wars made solely or even in large part by the munition manufacturers' desires for profit.

By all means, let us take the profit out of war. In war time conscript wealth. But that will not prevent wars. Mussolini has practically nationalized the Italian armament industry. Yet he launched one war in Ethiopia in 1935 and another in Spain in 1936-37. Japan would have seized Manchuria even if its business men had been denied an immediate profit. For war is regarded as a period of national investment. If the capitalists can gather no profits during the war they will simply plan to get more profits after the war. Wars are a gamble on future profits and a consequence of the accumulation of past profits. Taking the profit out of war would not stop wars. Taking the profit out the economic system would. The propaganda for neutrality often befogs these fundamental issues.

When an international armed conflict is of no concern to us we cannot be drawn in no matter how much we buy or sell. But if our interests are involved, we shall not be neutral no matter what laws Congress passes. William C. Bullitt, the American Ambassador to France, who knows more about foreign affairs than many United States officials, said in a recent speech in Paris which, according to reliable reports, he had previously read over the transatlantic telephone to President Roosevelt: "It is impossible to affirm that, if war broke out in Europe, America would not be forced in as in 1917." This is indisputable. Every student of international affairs must agree to this proposition. The only sensible procedure, if we are true lovers of peace, is to go beyond neutrality and create a foreign policy conducive to world peace.

To do so requires first an understanding of the international situation and then a relationship to it. There are in the world today three nations which insist that they must expand territorially. They are Germany, Italy, and Japan. In each case the pressure behind the expansionist foreign policy is propaganda about economic insufficiency. These powers have failed to solve the problem of adequately feeding and clothing their own people. Even autarchy, so integral a part of the fascist program, must be looked upon as a measure of preparedness, an industrial weapon forged in advance of a war of aggression.

If the expansionist designs of fascist states are their only salvation, then the non-fascist states, by thwarting those ambitions, are condemning fascism to death. Do England, France, and America wish to pass this death sentence? They are not sure. They fear lest fascism in falling bring down the capitalist structure with it. They hesitate and waver. They do not know their own minds and therefore they take refuge in neutrality, which is just what the fascist aggressors want.

Foreign policy is not a combination of schemes devised in private by government officials. It is always the exact reflection of domestic policy and domestic social conditions. If the great democracies of the world were firmly anti-fascist, it would be easy for them to have a firm anti-fascist foreign policy. That is why the Soviet Union experiences no difficulty in formulating an anti-fascist foreign policy. The Russian social system is by its very nature anti-fascist. The U. S. S. R. has therefore been the strongest pillar of European peace, and the policies of Litvinov as he has eloquently expounded them at Geneva

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and elsewhere have won ringing applause throughout the world. Russia is not neutral, for Russia is anti-fascist; we are playing around with neutrality because we do not know what we are. It is fairly safe to assume that President Roosevelt and Secretary Hull are anti-fascist in their convictions—but not in their deeds. At this moment a brazen invasion of Spain is going on. The fascist powers, in undisguised violation of their own signatures, of every canon of international law, of every principle of decency and humanity, are trying to crush the Spanish people and their democratically elected, legally constituted government. Apparently that does not matter to us. We sit by idly and contentedly, denying Spanish democracy the means to defend itself. Neutrality followed to its logical conclusion has made America effectively pro-fascist.

The alternative is not war. There are other weapons at our disposal. The President of the United States could, with a few strong, well-chosen words spoken in private and if need be in public, stop the invasion of Spain. He could by so doing become the winner of the Nobel peace prize for 1937. This country has a duty to mankind and to itself. An ounce of war prevention is worth a pound of neutrality.

Medical Censorship in California

BY LILLIAN SYMES

San Francisco, March 12

SOME TIME in 1934 friends and advocates of some form of "socialized medicine" hailed with delight, and also with surprise, a report that the California Medical Association had gone on record in favor of compulsory health insurance. At about the same time the California Medical Association, together with the State Emergency Relief Administration (now the WPA), initiated an exhaustive study of medical needs in California. This news, on top of the fact that a state legislative inquiry into the cost of medical care had been undertaken in 1933, indicated that the cause of social medicine was looking up in the Far West. In the long and discouraging battle to rationalize medical progress in terms of social need this seemed to be the first breach in the fortifications of that most formidable defender of the individualistic status quo, the American Medical Association.

Later and fuller reports proved that the moral victory in California was by no means a decisive one. The indorsement of a medically controlled "health-insurance system"—not by the C. M. A.'s membership but by its feebly insurgent House of Delegates—was a mere depression baby, born of the desperation of medical practitioners unable to collect their bills. As the first faint rays of recovery lightened the economic horizon, the bill which embodied this plan, though it was a "doctor's plan," conceived primarily in the interest of the profession itself, was permitted after many delays and amendments to die in a legislative committee. The California Medical Association's other depression baby, the Dodd Report on Medical Needs in California, is however very much alive, and the C. M. A. is in the embarrassing position of questioning its legitimacy while demanding full parental control. This exhaustive two-year study of health needs, financed largely by state and federal funds to serve as a basis for intelligent legislative action, has been withheld from publication by the very group which initiated it—the California Medical Association itself.

It may be well to give a brief history of the Dodd report and its relation to the health-insurance movement in California. In 1933 the serious effects of the depression upon the economic status of the medical rank and file prompted the California Medical Association to ask the state Emergency Relief Administration for funds with which to finance a survey of medical needs in the state. The request was granted to the extent of $60,000. Of the total of $95,000 needed to complete the project, approximately $35,000 was appropriated by the C. M. A. itself. The official "sponsor" required for projects to be financed by federal funds was found in the state Department of Public Health. Dr. Paul Dodd, associate professor of economics in the University of California at Los Angeles, was placed in charge of this "Medical-Economic Survey."

At about the same time the state Senate created a Commission on the Cost of Medical Care. In 1935, after extended public hearings, this commission produced a voluminous report recommending a compulsory form of health insurance. (The Dodd report was not yet in.) The commission's bill approached the problem from the medical rather than the economic angle and provided that complete control of the insurance set-up should finally rest with the C. M. A. It was this bill which the C. M. A.'s House of Delegates indorsed. The association did not push it however, and after numerous hearings and amendments and a bitter fight against it by the drug interests, the big industrialists, the Christian Scientists, the fraternal medical groups, and others, the bill was killed.

In May, 1935, a group of assemblymen headed by Dr. Dewey Anderson, a leader of the progressive bloc in the legislature, introduced a bill creating an Assembly Interim Committee on Health and Health Insurance. The bill was carried, but in appointing the five members of the committee the Speaker of the House "stacked" it with a majority who were opposed to any kind of social control of medicine. In spite of this initial handicap the

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committee, whose report has recently been submitted, had certain advantages. By the time it met, a short preliminary report of the Dodd study had been prepared in mimeographed form and Dr. Dodd himself was called as a witness at a committee hearing. Thus certain findings of the Dodd study were incorporated in the Interim Committee's report to the state legislature. These quotations are the source of the C. M. A.'s present embarrassment and the reason why the report in full may never reach the public.

Work on the California Medical-Economic Survey, under Dr. Dodd's supervision, occupied two years, 1934 and 1935, during which 20,000 representative homes (65,000 persons), 3,500 physicians, 2,200 dentists, 600 osteopaths, and the staffs of numerous hospitals, clinics, and public-health agencies were interviewed. The report calls attention to the fact that while the United States has a larger proportion of licensed physicians than any other nation—one for approximately every 865 persons—the state of California occupies an even more favorable position than the nation as a whole. It has one physician for every 568 persons. Its per capita income is the fourth highest in the United States, and its people spend more than $150,000,000 annually on medical and dental care. Yet more than half its population live in families with a net income of less than $1,200, three-fourths in families with less than $2,000; only four out of a hundred families have incomes of more than $5,000.

In spite of the state's better-than-average proportion of doctors, hospitals, and public-health agencies—which in California as elsewhere are not distributed according to need—and in spite of its favorable per capita income, the failure of the present professional set-up to meet the need for medical and dental care among low-income groups is indicated by the following figures:

Of an estimated 658,000 persons who have reported the receipt of a medical diagnosis showing the need of treatment, only 440,000 have received such treatment. This leaves an estimated 218,000 persons at any given time who have been diagnosed as needing medical attention but who are not receiving it.

Of an estimated 340,000 persons who have received a dental diagnosis calling for treatment, only 160,000 have received it; more than half of those diagnosed are not getting the treatment prescribed.

Not even the most rugged of medical individualists can explain away such figures on the basis of individual carelessness or shiftlessness. "Can we talk of 'too many doctors and dentists,'" asks Dr. Dodd, "can we boast of our high health standards, or can we stand by with complacence satisfied with our present system of private practice in view of these conditions? Without searching further into the problem, here alone can be found twenty or more prospective new patients for every licensed physician and surgeon in the state."

The report indicates further that the fault lies not so much in excessive *average* charges and payments as in the uncertainty and wide variation in charges and payments. In 1934, 65 per cent of the people of the state had only 10 per cent of the medical charges thrust upon them; 80 per cent carried 25 per cent of the charges; 90 per cent carried 43 per cent; while 10 per cent of the people carried 57 per cent. In the same year the average net income of physicians had dropped to a little more than half of the 1929 level.

The conclusions to be drawn from these and other revelations of unmet medical needs are obviously conclusions which the Medical Association is reluctant to have publicized. The excuses given have a familiar ring to any professional fact-finder: the "emergency" of 1932-35 is now over; medical needs no longer constitute a "problem"; the public clinics can take care of the situation quite adequately; the Dodd report is a social-economic, not a medical study; Professor Dodd is an economist, not a doctor (he was just as much an economist in 1934); there is no need to publish such a document. And one gathers that even if there were, the C. M. A. wouldn't like it. For the Dodd report proves quite conclusively that public medical needs constitute a permanent "emergency"; that the clinics do not and never have answered these needs; that public health *is* a social-economic problem; that the only answer is some form of socialized medicine.

Dr. Dodd has already relinquished his 600-page manuscript to the C. M. A., and certain members of that organization who have seen it have declared it to be the best and most comprehensive state study of the problem that has yet been made. But although the study itself was financed largely by public funds and officially sponsored by a state agency, the C. M. A., which appropriated only a minor portion of its cost, now claims exclusive copyright. It is said that the association has offered to publish the report providing it is "condensed" and its findings "generalized"—in short, if it is emasculated. A more recent rumor is that the C. M. A. will publish a few copies in full next July, after the possibility of legislative action has been postponed for another two years. As this is written, no definite announcement on the subject has been made.

Within a few weeks the resolution of the Assembly Interim Committee on Health Needs calling for a commission to crystallize public thought and coordinate all available material on social medicine will probably be approved by the state legislature. The resolution calls for a commission composed of three members of the legislature, a representative from each healing profession, and one from each interested group—labor, business, women's clubs, and the like. Powerful leaders in the C. M. A. object to the lay character of this proposed commission. Certainly the Dodd report should be utilized by such a commission and should serve as a departure for public discussion of the subject. It was for just such a purpose that the study was made. But unless the C. M. A. decides that it cannot afford to play John Sumner to an important public document, or the new commission can force its release, or Professor Dodd is induced to meet the C. M. A.'s terms and permit partial publication, the California Medical-Economic Survey may furnish another chapter in the great American fact-finding farce.

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Trotsky vs. Malraux

[The following dispatch, quoting Leon Trotsky, was issued through the United Press from Mexico City on March 8.]

LEON TROTSKY today accused the French writer André Malraux, who is at present in New York, of being a Stalin agent. He also charged Malraux with being one of those responsible for the failure of the Chinese revolution. "When Malraux pays tribute to the courageous and perspicacious policy of the Cárdenas government toward the Spanish revolution, I obviously have no objection," said Trotsky. "I only express my regret that Mexico's initiative found no support." Trotsky says, moreover, that Malraux's trip is for the purpose of halting the movement to unmask Moscow. "New York is the center of the movement in favor of a review of the Moscow trials, which is the only way of preventing new judicial assassinations," Trotsky said. It is unnecessary to explain how much this movement alarms the organizers of the Moscow amalgams.

"In 1926 Malraux was serving the Comintern and the Kuomintang in China and is the one who carries the responsibility for the strangulation of the Chinese revolution. Malraux is organically incapable of moral independence; he is official by birth. In New York he issues an appeal to forget everything except the Spanish revolution. However, Malraux, like other diplomats, speaks least of that which concerns him most. His solicitude for Spain did not prevent Stalin from exterminating dozens of old revolutionaries. Malraux himself left Spain for the purpose of conducting a campaign in the United States in defense of the judicial work of Stalin and Vyshinsky. It is necessary to add that the policies of the Comintern in Spain reflect completely its fatal policies in China. . . ."

[M. Malraux's reply, which appears below, has not been printed in full in any other publication.]

New York, March 13

When I arrived in the United States, I had not read the newspapers for seven days—the period of the crossing. On my arrival I found a statement of Mr. Trotsky in which he called on me as a witness. *[This refers to Trotsky's assertion, published on February 16, that Malraux among others had visited him in the south of France at the time he was accused of meeting Vladimir Romm in Paris.]* I have just received a second statement in which Mr. Trotsky accuses me of being responsible for the strangulation of the Chinese revolution, accuses me of being incapable of moral independence, and finally of being an agent of Stalin.

I can maintain that Hemingway is Mr. Roosevelt's literary pseudonym or I can accuse Mr. Trotsky of being the author of the Charlie Chaplin films. It is easy to prove what one has done; it is another story to prove what one has not done. Up to the present time Mr. Trotsky has devoted to the Chinese revolution a considerable number of studies (one of them appeared on the occasion of the publication of one of my books). But Mr. Trotsky, who has attacked personally all those whom he held responsible for the Chinese defeat, has never ascribed to me an important political role in this revolution. For a period of ten years I have been of no account in the history of the Chinese revolution. Now I suddenly become its most important figure. Is it because in the interim I have declared that the immediate collectivization of land in Spain is thoroughly impracticable and impossible, thus accepting the position of the Spanish Popular Front government and opposing the program of the P. O. U. M. and the Spanish Trotskyites? If I were in agreement with Mr. Trotsky on the Spanish question, then apparently I should never have been responsible for the defeat in China.

When Mr. Trotsky calls me an agent of Stalin, he brings to mind those French generals who during the World War described as German agents all those journalists who did not like the twist of their mustaches. Not to agree with Mr. Trotsky on his Spanish policy does not necessarily mean that one is an agent of Stalin. I was the only French writer who publicly came to the defense of Mr. Trotsky when he was expelled from France by M. Laval, but after that time I became the president of the Committee for the Liberation of Dimitrov when he was unjustly accused of having burned the Reichstag and then kept in prison after his acquittal. Apparently to Mr. Trotsky moral independence consists not only in defending Mr. Trotsky but also in *not* defending Dimitrov.

If Mr. Trotsky, instead of declaring that I am in the United States to uphold the indictments in the Moscow trials, had read the newspapers, it would have been easy for him to see that in not a single interview of those which I have given have I touched this subject. But Mr. Trotsky is so obsessed with whatever concerns his personal fate that if a man who has just come from seven months of active fighting in Spain makes the statement that help for Republican Spain comes before all else in importance, such statement seems to Mr. Trotsky to hide something.

Mr. Trotsky says that no country has followed Mexico's initiative in aiding the Spanish Loyalists. Here he knows he lies.

I reserve the right to discuss later at greater length the fundamentals of this debate, which go far beyond the personality of Mr. Trotsky or myself, but I deplore now the incredible levity with which Mr. Trotsky is ready to hurl any accusation in order to dramatize his personal conflicts. I regret the total difference with which he offers the French fascists weapons to use against a man whom they are trying desperately to attack. This levity is calculated to make one look with the greatest distrust upon the present Spanish policy of Mr. Trotsky.

Mr. Trotsky realized that if anyone had credited his charge that I was an agent of the Comintern my work in this country in behalf of Spain would have suffered. Was that the purpose he wished to achieve?

ANDRE MALRAUX

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Issues and Men

BY OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

What Is *The Nation* Coming to?

RETURNING from the West Indies, I find that the difference in temperature between the two regions is not what it was when I left. Thanks to the President's Supreme Court proposal, the sitdown strikes, Marriner Eccles with his threat of imminent inflation, and Fiorello LaGuardia's outspokenness, there is certainly heat enough in God's country to make a trip to any torrid zone unnecessary even for invalids. Why go to view Mont Pelée or the lovely Souffrière on Guadeloupe when one can buy a daily newspaper or one's favorite weekly and find molten lava erupting on every page? As for our columnists, heaven help us! Never since the Battle of the Boyne was there anything to compare with it. If you have shillalahs prepare to use them now.

The hottest and most terrifying of all the Scribes and Pharisees is my own editorial associate and next-page neighbor in *The Nation,* Heywood Broun. What a battle ax he swings! Let Senator Wheeler or President Conant dare to breathe opposition to Fifteen Men on a White House Bench and Broun, with or without a bottle of rum, has his teeth in the unfortunate's neck, shaking him until all the disgraceful facts about his grandfather, his father, and his predecessor in his present job, together with his previous sins, tumble out of his gyrating pockets. I am so scared that I would conceal, if I could, my opposition to the Roosevelt method of achieving the Supreme Court reform I have urged so long. Unfortunately, while I was among those calm and patient isles I wrote a piece for some newspapers telling where I stood, in utter unawareness that I was thereby reading myself out of lifelong liberal associations. So now I am a recreant liberal gone tory, a miserable person who would fiddle with a constitutional amendment while America burns—with shame for Nine Old Men. Well, ugly facts will out, and I suppose it will now be spread abroad that for years I employed non-union labor and actually own an honorable discharge ("character excellent"!) from one of those strike-breaking militias. What has covered me with humiliation most of all are these words of Broun's: "On which side are you going to fight? Are you going to fight standing beside Bishop Manning, A. Lawrence Lowell, the *Herald Tribune,* the Liberty League, and William Randolph Hearst? Make up your mind."

Nothing else has revealed so clearly my present baseness, the falsity of my standards and values. How much time have I not wasted during these long years trying to assay rights and wrongs, seeking to get facts, endeavoring to weigh ethical values and to balance the merits and demerits of every proposal! How much, much easier it would have been always to have asked: "Where stand Manning and Hearst, James H. Rand, A. Lawrence Lowell, Henry Cabot Lodge, President Harding, the warmakers, the patrioteers, and all the others I have hated or despised?" And then to have stood against them. But, after all, it is not quite so easy, for there are times when even a tory blunders on to the right side. Lowell, the unforgivable condemner of Sacco and Vanzetti, fought gloriously for professorial freedom of conscience and speech in the war days, when almost every other college head became a witch-burner. And Hearst was right, whatever his motives, when he tried to keep the United States out of the World War. It was hard in the fight against the Treaty of Versailles to find oneself a political bedfellow with Senator Lodge, with the *Herald Tribune,* and, what is worse, the Chicago *Tribune,* and with all the diehards and reactionaries. But there never was a better job done than that. No one who fought that fight can do aught but rejoice in it when he sees today that treaty trampled underfoot with not one human being to do it reverence; when he sees the failure of the League, damned from the start by being intertwined with the folly and wickedness and injustices of the treaty. Yet there were liberals in plenty then to say: "Look at *The Nation!* See the company it keeps! Think of *its* editors striking hands with Moses and Harding!"

For years one wing of the Abolitionists occupied precisely the same position as the swashbuckling cavalier secessionists in the South whom they so bitterly attacked. They publicly burned the Constitution. They wanted "no union with slaveholders." They wanted the Southern states to get out of the Union and to stay out until purged of their sin of sins, human slavery. And how they were pilloried in the North, denounced, vilified, and ridiculed for their secessionist pro-slavery bedfellows! I might go on and even point out that Heywood Broun stands shoulder to shoulder with William Green in opposition to Hitler and all his vile works. Does that make Hitler deserving of Broun's support? I hardly think so.

That I live in another day and age was clear to me when I read recently in *The Nation*—the same journal which fought so hard against Grant's proposal to pack the court—an appeal by Professor Karl N. Llewellyn of Columbia Law School, calling on us to join "the anti-tory front," although he admits that the President's proposal "is unfortunate from every angle but one." So, as Dorothy Thompson says, let us joyously go forward with such advanced and radical thinkers and curbers of the court as Jim Farley, Joe Robinson, Homer Cummings, and Pat Harrison—bedfellows whom Heywood Broun has loved so dearly in the past.

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BROUN'S PAGE

Expert Testimony

WHEN it was first announced that the Senate Judiciary Committee would hold a hearing on the President's proposals, I assumed that naturally the justices of the Supreme Court would be invited to testify. And I assumed and still assume that the members of the High Bench ought to accept this opportunity with alacrity. Strangely enough the opposition to such a procedure comes from those who are against any kind of change. It seems to me curious that the defenders of the status quo should want to bar the very men whose opinions readily fall under the head of expert testimony.

Recently rumors have been flying about of very sharp division among Supreme Court members. I am not referring to certain five-to-four decisions or to the acid quality in some of the dissenting opinions. Of course Washington is a whispering gallery, and some of the wildest tales which circulate are probably untrue. And yet there seems to be a basis for the belief that within the court itself there is difference of opinion as to its field and function. If this is so the people of America have every right to hear the arguments of nine men who are vitally concerned with the most important issue now before the country.

We take great pride in saying that our judicial system rigidly excludes all star-chamber procedure. That is less than accurate. It is true that cases are publicly argued before the Supreme Court and that when a decision is rendered, both sides—in some cases three sides—make open statements as to the reasons for their interpretations. But this still leaves too much off the record. There should be a stenographic report of the arguments which occur in chambers. Possibly some lapse of time might be arranged. In order to spare the blushes of good men and true, a year might pass by before any publication of what occurred when the nine let their hair down in discussion which at times may have been somewhat acrimonious.

As far as legal matters go, the Supreme Court of the United States should have no private life at all. The most intimate conferences should be preserved so that posterity may weigh and evaluate the mental conflicts. As things stand, not even the wisest scholar can write a complete biography of the Constitution, the men who made it, and the men who are still contributing to its meaning. In a sense every highly debatable case is a sort of constitutional convention in which something is added to the scope of the instrument or subtracted from it. It is a legitimate curiosity to demand not only the present publicity of prepared opinions but some account of the manner in which they were arrived at.

In two recent episodes it has seemed to me that the Supreme Court adopted a decidedly horse-and-buggy attitude toward publicity, which after all is just another word for information. Indeed, it might even be argued that this hostility to press and radio breaks the tradition of the Founding Fathers. It is true that the Constitutional Convention met in secret, but at least one first-class reporter was present in the person of Madison, and his diary has furnished invaluable material on the discussion which went on behind closed doors. I believe it is also said that Benjamin Franklin was quite a sieve and that he could be pumped by any journalist of the day who caught him at the right hour and in just the proper mood.

But in the last few months the Washington correspondents have undertaken to establish a somewhat new custom in regard to the court, and when the President's proposals were announced, the reporters boldly invaded the Greek temple on the hill and undertook to get from the nine men some kind of answer to such pertinent questions as "How come?" and "What about it?" No news gatherer got any farther than a brief meeting with an office boy or a secretary, and presently the private police of the building were instructed to throw the interlopers out. The Washington correspondents have not yet developed sufficient labor consciousness to put on a sitdown strike until such time as some one of the justices comes through with a story.

Again a salesman who undertook to sell "The Nine Old Men" in front of the Supreme Court building was given the bum's rush. And within the fortnight the members of the High Bench refused to let radio reports of the proceedings go out from the basement of the building. I think this attitude is unfortunate. I believe the public has a right to get every scrap of useful information.

It seems to me that it would be wholly dignified and proper for one and all of the members of the Supreme Court to appear before the Senate Judiciary Committee and voice their own views at length and with complete candor. Justice McReynolds has not been considered the most liberal member of the bench, and yet he undertook, quite properly I think, to discuss some phases of the court problem at a fraternity banquet. Later, to be sure, Justice McReynolds stated that he probably would have said nothing if he had known that reporters were present. And here again I catch a hint of an attitude which seems to me deplorable. If Justice McReynolds thinks that the members of Phi Delta Theta have a right to know his views on the New Deal, I see no reason why he should wish to withhold this information from the other voters of the country.

HEYWOOD BROUN

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BOOKS *and the* ARTS

REVOLUTION BY POETIC JUSTICE

BY WILLIAM TROY

IT IS no secret that the group of young English poets which includes W. C. Auden, Day Lewis, Michael Roberts, and Stephen Spender has caused almost as much embarrassment to the orthodox Marxists as to the bourgeois enemy against whom they wage guerrilla warfare in their verse. The response to Mr. Auden's recent volume,[1] for example, demonstrates this ambiguity to a marked degree. Those critics who do not deplore the shock tactics adopted in certain of the poems in the collection discover in certain others a retreat into the private vision which amounts to something like religious backsliding. Obviously Mr. Auden is being completely pleasing to nobody just at present; and the sharp division in his verse can only suggest that he himself is still rather undetermined as to his precise function as a poet. On the one hand, he is a satirist of such vigor, freshness, and ingenuity that at first glance it seems impossible not to recognize him as a militant revolutionist. But his satire is strongest on the purely negative side; it is the satire of "The Vision of Judgment" rather than that of "The Hind and the Panther." It is clearer to what things the poet is opposed than to what things he gives allegiance.

On the positive side the values are but dimly implied through a rhetoric that never finds symbols as definite and compelling as those which are made to stand for the rejected order. Moreover, these values do not operate in the only way in which they could prove their complete reality for a poet—through an aesthetic ordering that is a reflection of an ordering of the whole personality. In Yeats's phrase, Mr. Auden gives the impression of quarreling with his neighbors without having made sure that everything is perfectly all right at home. It is understandable enough why the churchgoing Communist has found something distinctly suspect in the centrifugal quality of the communism emanating from this verse. It is communism not only without benefit of clergy but without any very fixed points of reference in the mind. And like any contemporary attitude that becomes too detached from intellectual support, it is continually dissipating into a wholly negative and morally self-consuming romanticism. (It is irrelevant that Mr. Auden has just reported in Spain: the final test of values in a poet is not in action but in poetry.) As for the other sort of poetry that Mr. Auden writes, the personal love lyrics in the current volume, it possesses a distinction of line and surface that is all too rare in our time. But its connection with the attitudes elsewhere expressed in his work is either too general or too remote to be established without considerable sophistry. Eda Lou Walton has pointed out that the influence of Hopkins has been discarded for that of A. E. Housman; and there is a more than technical interest in the shift. It may signify a temporary abandonment of the effort toward complete self-integration around an idea, of which Hopkins provided the example, for the more limited notations of the unattached sensibility.

The incertitude that is merely implicit in Mr. Auden's poetry is quite explicit in the work of other members of his group, particularly Stephen Spender, who has just written what he calls an act of will, an assertion in behalf of two things that he very much cares for, justice and poetry. The book[2] is a bewildering farrago of historical information, political theory, personal autobiography, and unamalgamated emotion. The whole first part is an account of liberalism along the lines drawn by Harold J. Laski and John Strachey; and this is of course an account of liberalism that will be thoroughly familiar to readers of liberal journals. Liberalism is again represented as a smoke-screen ideology promoted by the middle class during the last two centuries to conceal its real motives from itself and from others. And the thesis is that since political freedom without economic freedom has proved inadequate to all but a privileged few in the modern world, democracy must immediately be replaced by communism. In the third section, which is a journey in space as the first has been a journey in time, we are taken on a political Cook's tour through England, fascist Italy and Germany, and the Webbs' two-volume version of Soviet Russia. It is true that these final chapters were written before the Spanish civil war and the last Moscow trials. But presumably, since Mr. Spender was prepared for the former event and at least reconciled to the previous set of trials, these events do not alter his fundamental picture. From the first and third sections we are expected to receive an impression of the external facts of social and political reality presented to the disinterested "liberal-idealist" observer.

In the middle section, which is entitled The Inner Journey, Mr. Spender is concerned not so much with facts as with his own attempt to achieve an emotional orientation in regard to them. He submits himself to an inner catechism, asking himself disconcerting questions concerning the authenticity of his conversion, the relationship between his role as poet and his role as propagandist, and the problem of the freedom of the individual. Here we are brought to the core of those problems which are treated elsewhere in the book only through the clichés of current political analysis. And it is here that we can detect more than once evidence of

[1] "On This Island." By W. H. Auden. Random House. $1.50.
[2] "Forward from Liberalism." By Stephen Spender. Random House. $2.

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the deep personal confusion that is responsible, among the members of his group, for the increasing breach between their declared allegiance and their poetic practice.

For Mr. Spender justice, freedom, and equality correspond not to moral or intellectual values but to emotions: "To me Beethoven's 'Fidelio' has a greater emotional appeal than any other music, because the music of that opera is dominated by the excitement of one idea, one word, one musical phrase—*Freiheit.*" There would be nothing suspect about this utterance if it were immediately followed by an identification of the sentiment with an objective set of values outside the individual. But Mr. Spender persists in retaining a distinction between the individual capable of having such a feeling and communism as a dogma. This is evident in the conclusion that "the only integrity is personal integrity. Therefore, whilst it is right to demand absolute loyalty from the individual to his group, it is wrong to try and transform his mind into a generalized group mind." Such a separation of individual integrity from the integrity of the group offers another classic example of the irrepressible romantic ambition to have one's cake and eat it too. But the separation is made even more vivid in the distinction between poetry and prose, which are represented as "two separate ways of exercising one's consciousness." Prose of the propagandist sort is concerned with problems of the will; but poetry with "that of crystallizing and contemplating a given situation, a situation which is permanent and yet contains within itself inescapable truth, which is a seed of energy, planted in the mind of the reader." Logically, of course, this amounts to that divorce between morality and aesthetics which left critics so bitterly denounce in the writers of the last century. Problems of will—of which social action is here the most prominent—are segregated in one section of the personality, and creative activity in another. The only thing that could possibly unite them would be some body of dogma common to the poet and his society; but Mr. Spender is opposed to dogma. "Principles are more important than dogma, because principles develop, whilst a dogma is static. . . . The real leaders, the true loyalists, stand above the party code."

It is hardly necessary to point out that what all this amounts to is a religion without a church. (How enthusiastically, it may be asked, would this last statement be welcomed in Moscow?) The "principles" for which Mr. Spender stands are not in their broadest sense different from those of romanticism, which was also a religion without a church. And romanticism, it will be recalled, is intimately bound up with that liberalism which Mr. Spender is so busily exposing throughout his volume. In the final analysis the motivation behind his group is indistinguishable from what we find in Byron, Shelley, and the other English poets of the early nineteenth century. Leaving aside comparisons of a strictly literary nature, there is the same rejection of external authority, the same failure to relate the individual to the social will, and the same belief in progress. It is communism with a distinctly English accent. That is to say, it is the old

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by William H. Hessler

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ideal of Anglo-Saxon protestantism recovering from the effects of its alliance with nineteenth-century liberalism and ready to fall into the arms of a communism from which all external curbs have been carefully removed.

Another way of putting this would be to say that Auden, Spender, and the rest are indulging in the emotional satisfaction to be derived from communism as a revolutionary movement without undertaking the moral and intellectual responsibilities involved in its acceptance as a dogma. Communism is either a new label for a set of unanchored emotional attitudes, which makes it identical with romanticism, or it is a self-contained body of objective ideas, which makes it at least comparable to an orthodox church. Unless they submit their minds to these alternatives, their work is certain to vacillate between either an expansive rhetoric or a negative satire and the "narrow strictness" of the personal lyric, between problems of will and problems of poetry. Such an effort of the intellect, it may be added, is itself a moral struggle of the greatest fertility for poetry, as Hopkins demonstrated in his strenuous attempt to reconcile his sensibility with his theology. And the point is here made because such an effort, in the case of poets with their almost excessive vulnerability to contemporary experience, is a necessary condition to their further development.

BOOKS

Adam Smith Is Pleased

AN INQUIRY INTO THE NATURE AND CAUSES OF THE WEALTH OF NATIONS. By Adam Smith. Edited by Edwin Cannan. With an Introduction by Max Lerner. The Modern Library. $1.10.

WHEN my medium put me into touch with Adam Smith last night, the sage was chortling over the Modern Library edition of "The Wealth of Nations." He professed a livelier satisfaction in it than in any other edition since the very first. I ventured to express surprise. Mankind's interest in his work must be an old story to him. Disciples have been editing his classic since 1805; there have been no one knows how many reprintings in English, and a score of translations into other tongues. Why make so much of one more testimonial to the vitality of his book?

"Because," he answered, "the Modern Library edition exemplifies so well the excellent results produced by 'the obvious and simple system of natural liberty.' When I put my manuscript into the hands of Strahan, an excellent printer, he made it into a two-volume quarto and charged £1 16*s* per set. That was in 1776. On page 70 of this new edition you will find that common laborers in the province of New York were then earning the equivalent of two shillings sterling a day, substantially more than the London rate. It would have cost a New York laborer eighteen days of work to buy a copy of my first edition, not counting the cost of carriage. Now his great-great-great-grandson can buy a copy for $1.10, and I am assured that any New York laborer who does not earn

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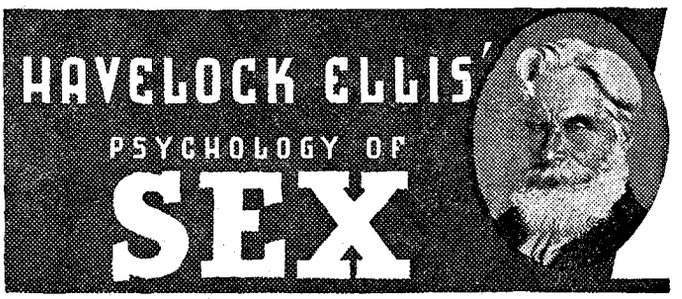
three or four times that sum daily by working only eight hours is underpaid. In terms of 'The Wealth of Nations,' real wages have risen more than fifty-fold since 1776. Could I find a more gratifying example of what individual initiative can accomplish under conditions of free competition?"

"And this is not a case," he went on, "of 'cheap and nasty' goods. The new edition, though less stately, is far more convenient to use than my two quartos. The type puts no strain upon the eye, the paper will pass, the binding is neat. I regret only that the publishers chose for their dust cover a cut of five men hauling on a rope. Why did they not illustrate the modern division of labor, instead of drudgery appropriate to the pyramid builders? But that is a trifle. What counts is the inside of a book, and I must admit that the present text is better than the text even of the last edition I saw through the press myself. I was rather unfortunate in my earlier editors from Playfair to McCulloch; but Edwin Cannan has more than made amends. He has treated me as a literary scholar would treat my favorite poet, Gray. He has noted every variation in the readings of the first five editions, he has checked each of my references and found many new ones, he has made a better index than I had patience for, he has supplied a terse marginal summary, and he has written a discreet account of my labors. The only thing wrong with Cannan's edition was that it cost $12, of which I hope he got a liberal share. But now all the admirable features of his work can be had in a single volume for $1.10. May I not congratulate myself that private enterprise has combined the best of scholarship with good mechanical quality and low price?"

"Most of all," Adam Smith concluded with what sounded like a chuckle in his voice, "I am delighted to see how right I was in believing that economic freedom nourishes freedom of thought. The publishers, who hope to make a profit from this edition, a venture in which they have my best wishes, commissioned an introduction from a young scholar who is critical of profit making and who compares my book to Machiavel's "Prince." I referred to 'the tyranny of one of Machiavel's heroes'; Max Lerner refers to the tyranny of my heroes, using the weapons I forged for them. He calls me 'something of a revolutionary,' which I strove to be in economic policy, and 'an unconscious mercenary in the service of a rising capitalist class,' which was no part of my intention. Mr. Lerner himself mentions my warnings about the conspiracies of commercial men against the commonweal, and recognizes that I have often been horrified by perverted applications of my doctrine. In return, I have the honor of agreeing with him that free enterprise has produced some ill results along with much that is good. But is not Mr. Lerner's own position as hard to classify as mine was, and as the position of any discriminating man who loves the truth is bound to be when he faces a complicated human situation? Does he not agree with me in approving the fruit of private enterprise as exemplified by the volume he has so kindly recommended to the reading public? Certainly he values, as I did in my day, freedom to criticize ideas and institutions. Under what other form of economic organization prevailing in the world would he have such liberty of speech as he enjoys in what he calls an 'individualistic capitalist economy'? In addition to my thanks for his introduction I hope Mr. Lerner will accept my congratulations upon flourishing within an economic system that permits him to dilate upon its shortcomings while he is contributing to one of its many good results."

WESLEY C. MITCHELL



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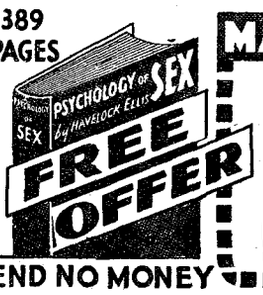

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Small Trade Wind

GREAT TRADE ROUTE. By Ford Madox Ford. Oxford University Press. $3.

PORTRAITS FROM LIFE. By Ford Madox Ford. Houghton Mifflin Company. $3.

"IMPRESSIONS are sensations that impinge and leave scars on the consciousness of the transient." Ford Madox Ford says so, and his consciousness of the transient has taken a good deal of punishment in its time. There are not many whose literary reminiscences begin at the age of six, with poor Mr. Swinburne being carried up the back stairs and put into the bath by the housemaid and the cabman. Fewer, perhaps, at eight, finding Turgenev waiting in the studio, could have entertained him in conversation. Surely anyone who claims to have been the model for the hero of "The Wings of the Dove" is entitled to that distinction, without being required to spell Merton Densher's name as Henry James did.

Mr. Ford, then, has reason to be writing his memoirs. His latest volume of them appears unpretentiously as a series of portraits from life, commissioned by the *American Mercury,* unified by no principle more rigorous than the vicissitudes of a professional career nor any tone more pervasive than the Anglo-American literary atmosphere which Mr. Ford exhales. Here and there, out of this collection of first-hand material about the curiosities, quarrels, and calamities of eleven authors, a personal detail springs into sudden relevance—Henry James's struggles with the servant problem or D. H. Lawrence's impact upon his first editor. Mr. Ford is frankly an impressionist . . . observe the *pointillage* of his style . . .

One generalization has been suggested to Mr. Ford by his variety of sitters. They can be divided into craftsmen and politicians, into those who wrote under the mutually exclusive influences of art and science. The defects of Wells, Galsworthy, and Dreiser he amiably imputes to the intrusion of politico-scientific reform in their work. The other line, which has its roots in the tradition of French naturalism, includes Turgenev, James, Conrad, W. H. Hudson, Stephen Crane, and presumably Mr. Ford as the last leaf. But the dichotomy cannot be pushed too far. Mr. Ford keenly appreciates the political significance of a work of art like "Sketches of a Sportsman." And how does he classify Hardy and Lawrence, whose artistry was vitiated, in both cases, by non-political obsessions?

Mr. Ford has just published another book which undertakes to save the world, although there seems to be no great hurry about it. His trade route, so far as it can be followed, is the fortieth parallel, separating Nordic from "Sino-Hellenic-Latin" culture, and indicating their movement from east to west. It also serves as a piece of mythological and anthropological machinery, to link Mr. Ford's recent American travels with the march of civilization as a whole. Mr. Ford lives in Provence, but we are his adopted literary public, and the prescription is for us. In New York he has taxied around Columbia Circus, in Washington he has seen the Japanese plum blossoms; he has watched cricket matches on the playing fields of Philadelphia and sipped coca-cola *à l'eau* through the cities of the South. " . . . I don't want really to *know* anything about the state of Delaware. I want to be able to regard everything here as a fairyland."

This qualification disarms any suspicion aroused by the statement that Delaware has a population of 23,000. There may even be some Pickwickian sense in which Friedrich Engels was the son-in-law of Karl Marx. And on the War

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Between the States, obviously, Mr. Ford is full of mint julep. From childhood amid the Hammersmith socialists to old age among the Nashville agrarians—in all this there is consistency, if not progress. The apocalypse of Mr. Ford is a nation of small producers, suburban *Robinson Crusoës* as it were. He can cite you practical instances of those who have raised their own vegetables and still found time to get on with their painting or poetry or wood-carving. In economic terms, subsistence farms, such as Monticello, suit him from the ground up. He stands for a *cassoulet de Castelnaudary* in every casserole.

There are things we cannot expect from a surviving impressionist. Mr. Ford has sympathy, generosity, catholicity, and that is much. His approach to literature and life can scarcely be characterized as historical, philosophical, or even critical; he might pardon a gallicism and let us call it degustation. He is the retired British officer sitting at the next table, who turns out, after a few drinks, to possess an amazing store of anecdotes and opinions, to have known the great by their first names, to be utterly frivolous and engaging, and only once in a while to become serious and a little tedious. *Ah, le bon vieux temps!* We can ignore his advice, but we cannot begrudge him his *douceur de vivre*.

HARRY LEVIN

The Meanings of Value

A PRIMER FOR CRITICS. By George Boas. The Johns Hopkins Press. $2.

IT IS an agreeable surprise to find a book on aesthetics written in simple language. Professor Boas is evidently not one of those philosophers who find it necessary to relate their discourses to their systems rather than to their readers. In "A Primer for Critics" he attempts clarification of the issues raised by the confusion of the different meanings of value. Criticism deals with value judgments; but a work may contain many different values, and Professor Boas does us the favor of showing us what the basis of these are in criticism. Though he modestly calls his book a primer, it is only so in the sense that the issues which it raises are primary.

Professor Boas reminds us that no one judgment of a work of art is or can be exclusive. Thus where political activities tend to take precedence over other forms of action, it is perhaps necessary to judge from the point of view of expediency alone. But social expediency is an instance of what Professor Boas calls the instrumental value of a thing. And he goes on to tell us that instrumental value, or the use value of a thing, is not the only kind of value. Instrumental values are for the sake of what he calls terminal values, those values which are for their own sakes. Here he makes a fresh application of an old truth. The distinction may be obvious, but Professor Boas adds that which is not so obvious—that the same object may have both instrumental and terminal value. He does not pretend to final judgment, but avoids it, and this is one of the book's likable traits.

He reminds us that things satisfy us because they are in relation to us, or, more precisely, to our particular states, which are mutable. We may find reason for approbation in what satisfies a particular want, but we change. And what we approved of once we now condemn, and with equal reason. Dr. Boas goes on to suggest that this is as true of the race as of the individual, and what we call eternal values are no more than the by-products of long-enduring yet transient experience. This has the merit of sharpening an old dispute.

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Those who speak familiarly of eternal values will have to speak with care or be suspected of emotional cant.

It is in the development of these simple points that the freshness of the work may be discovered. Unhappily, Dr. Boas sometimes compels us to cavil. It is true, as he says, that a work of art may mean many things to us, but these meanings have not all the same status. Some are accretions or secondary growths. It is not altogether sound to give these the same weight as those originally possessed. Nor is there so great a spread between the artist's and the observer's point of view as Dr. Boas seems to think. He has apparently forgotten that the artist is often but a communicative observer.

For felicity of thought and for simplicity and clarity of expression "A Primer for Critics" is to be commended. It is openly middle of the road, and so is likely to be ineffective. Its lessons will not and perhaps cannot be learned or followed now. When our present issues, so practically important, become historical ghosts, and innocent enjoyment is again respectable, Professor Boas's shade may have the pleasure of saying, "I told you so."

LINCOLN REIS

A Southern Record

MONTICELLO AND OTHER POEMS. By Lawrence Lee. Charles Scribner's Sons. $2.

A NUMBER of those reviewers who have been distressed by what is called modern poetry have hailed Lawrence Lee as the harbinger of a return to normalcy. To regard him in this way is to obscure his genuine merits. He writes agreeable, unpretentious lyrics and descriptive pieces, familiar but not imitative. Completely uninfluenced by recent experimentalism, he has affinities with the Georgians, but succeeds better than most of them in achieving economy of means and avoiding the rhetoric of spurious simplicity. A Southerner who draws his images easily from the Virginia small town and countryside, he yet does not rattle the tenor drums of regionalism.

Mr. Lee will disappoint those who expect the poet to see and feel and think things that escape the non-poet; his is the recording rather than the creative vision. His chief power lies in his ability to express the commonplace cleanly, with some embellishment of fancy. The poems are short, and most of them present a single picture with an associated mood or not too recondite idea. He observes "the purple irises break from the mud," and sees the earth move as a "slow red foam" behind the plowman. In the early morning he notes that "Farm women drove by with eggs held on their knees," and concludes therefrom that "Night had not moved the roadway into town." The poems about Jefferson which give the book its title are reverent but something less than argumentative. Night Journey and Slowly Moves the River, the two pieces in which narrative is attempted, are the least successful poems in the volume.

Judged by what he has written so far, Mr. Lee is one of those not too numerous writers who make wise use of a slight talent; he is the perennial minor poet who pleases but does not vivify. It is both unfair and unnecessary to compare him with the pathfinders. A reaction from certain excesses of the experimental and political writers is now in the offing. Those who are qualified to lead such a reaction must be able to see more, not less, than the poets from whom they are reacting; and if they wash up the old bottles they must fill them, not perhaps with a novel beverage, but from a new vintage.

PHILIP BLAIR RICE

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Naturalist in Colonial America

PETER KALM'S TRAVELS IN NORTH AMERICA. The English Version of 1770 Revised from the Original Swedish and Edited by Adolph B. Benson. With New Material from Kalm's Diary Notes. New York: Wilson-Erickson. Two Volumes. $12.50.

PETER KALM, a pupil of Linnaeus, sent here by the Swedish Academy of Science in 1748, was the first trained naturalist to come to this country on an official mission —to make systematic studies in the colonies and to publish them. His main object was to collect useful seeds and plants that could contribute to the industrial and agricultural development of Sweden, but the wide scope of his interests and his naive observations on the customs of men and beasts gave to his diaries the heterogeneous charm and value that made them a classic of travel in mid-eighteenth-century America. His explorations in Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, and southern Canada led not only to the description and classification of plants but to notes on the differing temperaments and manners of the English, Dutch, French, and Indians, on religious ceremonies of various sects, on construction of buildings, fences, cider presses, and birch canoes, on geography, topography, ores and minerals, recipes, diseases, wages, and windmills. Already, he notes in Pennsylvania, large tracts were being deforested and fish and game recklessly destroyed. In New York and Canada Indians were buying their wampum at exorbitant rates from the whites. In Canada beaver was considered fish and eaten on Fridays. In New York oysters were eaten only in the months containing *r*. There is occasional evidence that the fondness for tall tales was already an American characteristic. Kalm expresses doubt as to some of them but sometimes records a bit of leg-pulling with solemn credulity. Received by Franklin, Bartram, and other notables in Philadelphia, by the French governor-general in Canada, Kalm made many friends. The special opportunities for observation he thereby enjoyed make these volumes, now published for the first time in this country and long out of print abroad, of unique interest to students of our colonial period.

CLARA GRUENING STILLMAN

DRAMA

What Every Woman Knows

FOR many years Bernard Shaw and James M. Barrie were next-door neighbors. That used to be considered a very piquant fact, but as I watched Katharine Cornell's revival of "Candida" at the Empire Theater I could only wonder that the friendly propinquity had ever seemed odd. "Candida" is precisely "What Every Woman Knows" with fireworks accompaniment, and the two playwrights shared exactly the same "profound understanding of women." Shaw, to be sure, made fun of "manly men and womanly women"; in behalf of the female of the species he proclaimed that no member of it really wanted to be considered a creature apart. But that did not prevent him from creating Candida to reveal that men are only big babies after all or from setting her gently down upon as elevated and ornate a pedestal as one could easily find.

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To say this is not to deny that the play remains very entertaining indeed and amazingly fresh. It contains some of the liveliest verbal fencing ever provided by a modern playwright; and there is nothing surprising in the fact that in the days when it was new, audiences were too shocked by the manner to realize how acceptable the matter really was. As usual, Shaw is careful to make it clear that the conventional reasons for everything are completely wrong. Candida, for instance, is not really "virtuous." If there were nothing to be said in favor of sticking to one's husband except what moralists usually say, then Candida would not have stuck, or would, at the very least, have gone off on a week-end with her poet. Yet the choice she finally makes is precisely that of which any Victorian would have approved, and when you divest her reasons of their superficial paradoxes they are not significantly different from those of any moderately rational but conventional woman: romantic passion is less important than understanding, and the best husband is the one who needs you most. Candida is not the sister of Candide. She is more nearly related to the usual Victorian heroine, and Shaw himself never gets as far away from Victorian conclusions as he himself thinks. Indeed, it seems odd that the meaning or the "message" of Candida should ever have been debated as excitedly as it was, for that message is plain enough. In this play at least—and I suspect in most of the others—Shaw's iconoclasm is largely intellectual. His heroes and heroines rarely do anything which would shock anyone. But they often seem to be giving outrageous reasons for their conformity.

The production in which Miss Cornell is appearing serves very well to establish another fact which is becoming increasingly clear as Shaw is put to the test of time. All the better pieces remain too obviously actable to be dismissed as mere pamphlets interesting only in so far as the ideas remain fresh. There is something else in them, even if that something is not the flesh-and-blood reality of the supremely great dramatists. Shaw knows the tricks of his trade. If he cannot quite create living human beings, he can provide something better than mere talking machines to reel off his ideas. Each of his characters has not only a point of view but also at least a theatrical concreteness. The puppets not only speak but act; they have gestures, and traits, and peculiarities. And for stage purposes that is the next best thing to living character. His personages may have little life outside the play, but they have great liveliness within it.

"Sun Kissed" (Little Theater) is a somewhat guileless satire on California and the exiles who devote themselves to lotus eating there. The scene is a boarding-house inhabited by assorted eccentrics, and if one is in a not too exacting mood it is frequently funny. I liked best the pet goose cherished by one of the inmates. JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

"Cross-Town" (Forty-eighth Street Theater) converts into a technique a common axiom among third-rate talents that farce comedy and stupidity are two words for the same idea. Ostensibly a play about a plagiarist who, after being discovered, discovers in turn that he is capable of producing masterpieces on his own, it offers sheer noisomeness in place of gaiety and invention. All of its laughs are snickers and attach themselves to smoking-room properties like the bathroom plunger, the burlesque tease, and the predatory society matron in quest of purchasable primitives "with knotted muscles" for week-end uses. The result is a "comedy" so dishonest and *puant* that it emerges as an odor instead of an idea. B. B.

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FILMS

Plight of an Intellectual

CLOSE on the heels of "The Woman Alone" comes now another film which intrinsically is just as good and which extrinsically is even better. By those polysyllables I mean that "Razumov" (Cameo) enjoys the advantage over Alfred Hitchcock's picture of having a subject which is more immediately "important"; but that in every other respect the two are equal. By placing quotation marks around the word important I do not wish to suggest that the theme developed by Marc Allegret is merely supposed by certain people at the moment to have a special significance. It has it for me too—so clearly indeed that I went to the Cameo a second time, and I think it was not entirely to see a "good" film. The quotation marks are there in both cases in order to insinuate a doubt as to whether we know exactly what we mean by the terms in question. I suspect not; though we might guess that a film which was nothing but good would have only a mechanical fascination for us, and that a film which was nothing but important would be so unconvincing as to have no importance at all. At one extreme we should have nothing but art and at the other we should have nothing but propaganda; and either would be nonsense. The point is that both films strike very close to the great human mean; and that "Razumov" has the additional advantage of being able to

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address an area of our minds which everything in the world has been conspiring to prepare for it.

The hero of Allegret's film is a young Russian intellectual of 1906 or 1907; a student who is just graduating with honors from the university and who looks forward with innocent eagerness to a long life as scholar and professor. But as he returns to his room with academic praises ringing in his ears he finds concealed there another student, his old friend Haldin, who has just assassinated the Prime Minister and has run for sanctuary to the only man he knows whom he can trust to be disinterested. Razumov's irritation increases to horror as he realizes that he can get rid of Haldin only by going out to arrange with an accomplice for his escape from the city. This single act will involve him in a relationship to the revolutionary movement for which he knows he will have no stomach, since politics "disgust" him. He knows this. But he cannot conceive the series of adventures, the net of ironies, in which every step he takes henceforth will entangle him. Yesterday he had thought of himself as quite outside "the struggle"; today he is one of the most important persons in it in spite of the fact that he is still unable to feel it. By a sequence of peculiarly ghastly ironies he becomes a telltale, a traitor, a hero, a worker for the cause—becomes these things in other minds, that is; in minds which there is never opportunity to disabuse. And the greatest irony of all is that he remains a perfectly decent fellow throughout; his decency, in fact, being the motivation of each error as it is committed. The logical end is death.

Any spectator at all sensitive to the world as it now is will understand Razumov's plight immediately, and will sympathize with him; for even a cast-iron revolutionist will remember that the steps by which he entered into the faith were taken more slowly, and the outsider, the still disinterested intellectual, will find it easy to imagine himself pulled into a similar situation for which he has and may continue to have as little relish. Sympathy is so directly engaged by the film, indeed, that the question arises as to how "good" it would be if it were not so "interesting." For my part I am satisfied that it is as good as the best. The French have outdone every revolutionary film sent out from Russia since the classic days of Eisenstein and Pudovkin. They have provided for one thing four superb actors in Pierre Fresnay as Razumov, Jean-Louis Barrault as Haldin, Jacques Copeau as the chief of police, and Pierre Renoir as his agent. And they have provided in M. Allegret a director of the most refined yet simplest strength. The Russian directors have been handicapped, of course, by the necessity they seem to be under of proving that the revolution has been a grand success. "Razumov" returns to the time when it was still being fought for. And for the purposes of art there could be no richer time.

Max Eastman's assembly at the Filmarte of old moving pictures taken by various hands in Russia from "Czar to Lenin" is a film of an entirely different order. Mr. Eastman has arranged a great many documentary scraps in chronological order and with the help of his own voice has made them yield what is of course an important story, and one told in a contemporary idiom. Some of the pictures were taken by the Czar or by his photographer; some by the various armies of occupation during the civil war; some by Americans; some by persons now nameless. The result is highly interesting and valuable. It does not establish, however, that the documentary film is absolutely better than the imagined one. "Razumov" is different from "Czar to Lenin" in the same way that poetry is different from history; and in my opinion it is better.

MARK VAN DOREN

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Letters to the Editors

Senator Wheeler's United Front

Dear Sirs: In your issue of February 27 you stated: "It is difficult to see how a progressive like Senator Wheeler not only attacks the measure [the judiciary bill] but uses exactly the arguments of the tory editorials."

A year ago Senator Wheeler permitted the Montana Power Company to regain the Flathead power site (500,000 horsepower). Senator Wheeler has "gone respectable." Two years ago he carried Montana by a five-to-two ratio. At a meeting of 175 persons here on March 4, at the Roosevelt Supper, the President was cheered inordinately, Wheeler's stand against him bitterly scored. A vote would probably have revealed 170 with the President and 5 appointees of Mr. Wheeler present but not voting. The daily paper here, Anaconda owned, did not mention the next morning that we had met at all.

Wheeler is convinced that if he can unite the radicals, progressives, conservatives, and tories in his support he can succeed Mr. Roosevelt.

Butte, Mont., March 6 H. L. MAURY

Who Rules the Pope?

Dear Sirs: Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr commands the respect of all liberals, but when he discusses the papacy (*The Nation,* January 30) his kindly instincts and inherent Protestantism cause him to fall into what the Catholic brethren call "grievous error."

It is surprising indeed to witness a scholar of his repute analyzing recent elections to the papacy and deriving the thesis that Cardinal Pacelli will not be the next pope. Pacelli may or may not achieve his cherished dream, but certainly nothing in his apostolate has antagonized the thirty or so "Italian" cardinals, the Ultramontane clique, who actually will choose the next pope. Dr. Niebuhr alludes to the veto of the election of Cardinal Rampolla, but he omitted the fact that this was the last exercise of the "Spanish veto," and that the cause of this veto—the sexual aberrations of a Hapsburg—was not a matter of dispute among any of the hierarchs.

I have no patience whatsoever with the speech-bromide "the policy of the Vatican." A pope is much like the King of England in relation to Stanley Baldwin's Tories—he is the semi-mundane holy magnavox for the collective will of the dominating Italian cardinals, who in turn are motivated by nothing more than the inflexible continuity of a single policy —a two-thousand-year struggle for sovereignty over all mankind. The bald statement that "centralization . . . has not been the unvarying policy of the papacy" I could rebut with citations from Rhode Island back to Pelagius and forward to Martin Luther—and back again to the Plenary Councils.

The "policy" of the Vatican, while inelastic as to objective, permits perfect elasticity as to method. Deals such as those with Hitler and Franco are seeming evidences of changing policy, but neither these nor any others that I have ever examined reveal any inconsistency in liturgical lucubrations. In this connection it is a matter of continuing wonder that neither Dr. Niebuhr nor other qualified publicists have called attention to the fascinating possibility that the Vatican, via the dominating Italian cardinals, is become the cat's-paw of Signor Benito Mussolini.

The "honey" of Dr. Niebuhr's conclusions is in his assertion of "the ascendancy of Jesuit influence at the Vatican over the milder and more spiritual [sic] monastic groups." The Jesuits certainly are lovely *bêtes noires* for Protestant quaking parties—useful therefore to Catholic elements anxious to cover up skulduggery elsewhere. Right now the secular Catholic clergy are unmercifully flaying the battered Company of Jesus for its abysmal failure in Spain. If the Jesuits had any kind of "ascendancy" at the Vatican, you could bet your hammer and sickle that Cardinal Pacelli would never have been allowed to come to the United States a few days *before* a Presidential election—with a widely advertised scheme of adding Franklin Delano Roosevelt to the Hitler-Mussolini united front against Moscow. Roosevelt saw him, I believe, the day *after* the election, whereupon the naive Cardinal went away with some very pleasant memories —of a Hyde Park luncheon and a suave squire. Were our American cardinals' faces red?

JEAN LE GAULOIS

New York, February 11

Mr. Haggin Protests

Dear Sirs: When you asked me if I cared to answer Mr. Lesser's letter (*The Nation* of March 20), I replied that a demonstration of its worthlessness was not worth *The Nation's* space, its readers' attention, and my own time. By my standards the letter would not then have been printed; if you did print it you should have appended my comment; and since you have printed it I must waste the space, attention, and time.

When one says a speaker's range extends to 6,000 cycles one means that after this point there is a sharp drop in intensity such that anything beyond 6,000 is too attenuated to have appreciable effect in the entire sound that comes through. And if, now, what the pick-up reproduces and the amplifier amplifies beyond 6,000 is appreciable with auxiliary speakers but not appreciable without them, one may say that without them it is blocked.

As for the auxiliary speakers, an informed person would know that their range of operation does not begin exactly at 6,000, but overlaps the range of the chief speaker, extending down possibly to 3,500; and that their effect is therefore not merely to extend the range above 6,000, but—in the case where recording stops at 6,000—to reinforce frequencies between 6,000 and 3,500 (over-emphasizing treble as against bass), and also to add noises (of surface, needle chatter, pick-up resonance) beyond 6,000.

And now, having pointed out how the auxiliary speakers may affect the tone, I will add that it was the way records sounded with these speakers connected that caused me to experiment with disconnecting them, and it was the improvement which followed that caused me to bother with technical explanations. My approach, in other words, was the opposite of Mr. Lesser's—which explains the difference in our results.

B. H. HAGGIN

New York, March 18

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